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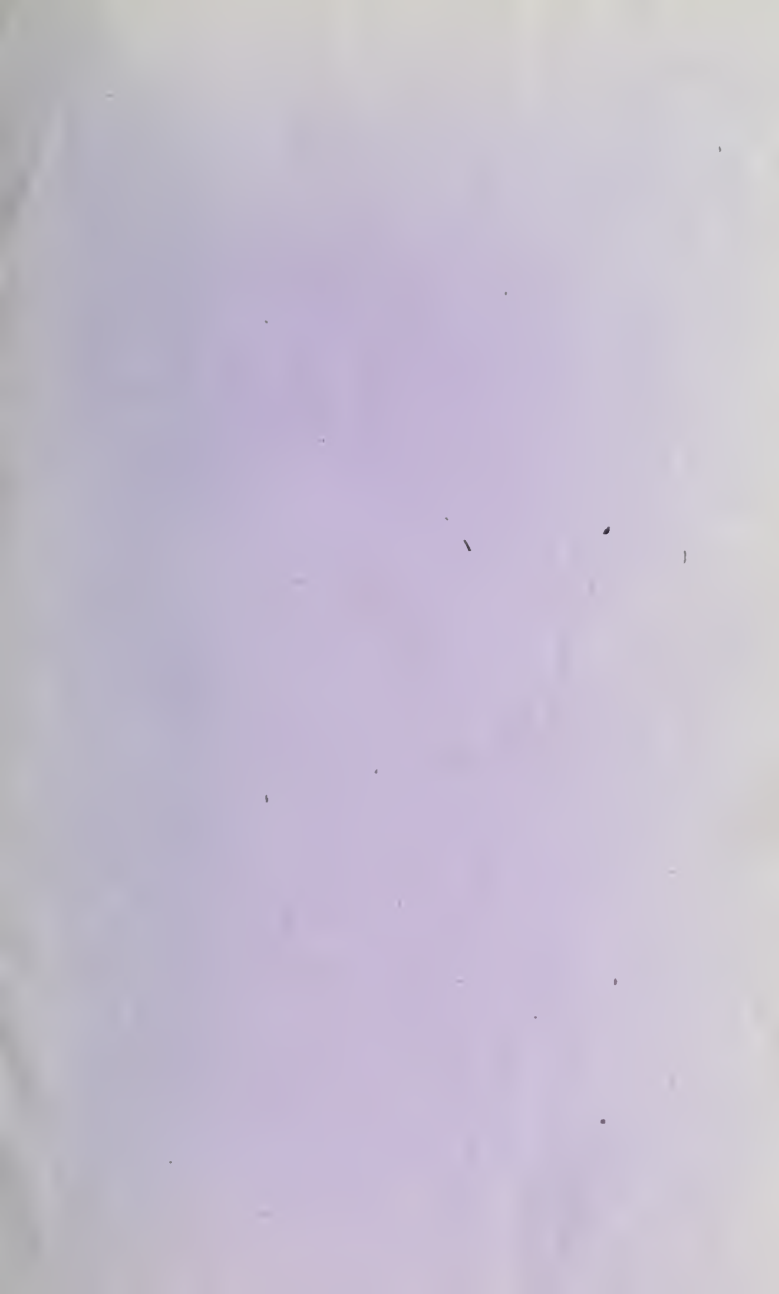
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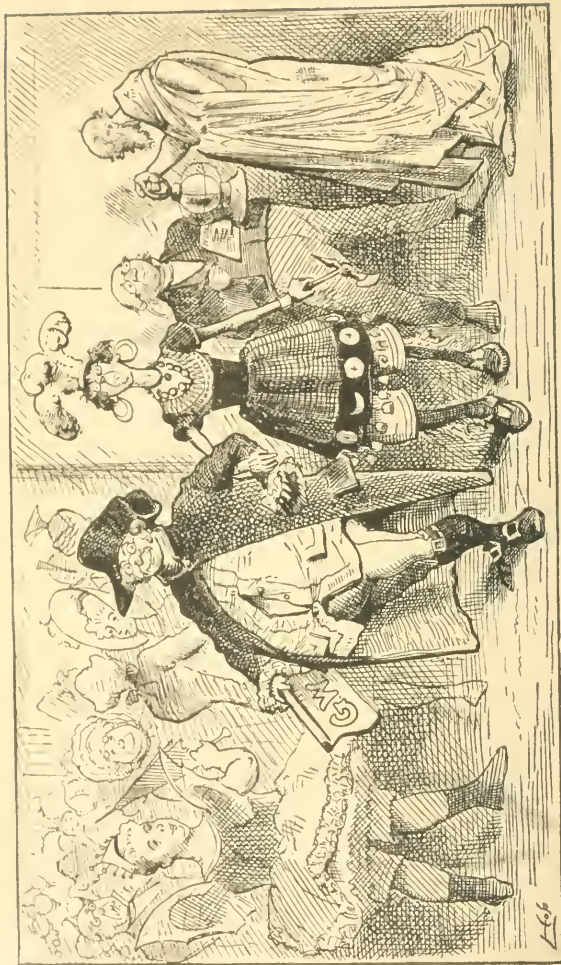
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VARIOUS PEOPLE IN VARIOUS CHARACTERS: (See Page 198.)

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KINGSBURY SKETCHES.

A TRUTHFUL AND SUCCINCT ACCOUNT
OF
THE DOINGS AND MISDOINGS OF THE INHABITANTS
OF
PINE GROVE;

Their Private Trials and Public Tribulations.

BY
JOHN H. KINGSBURY.

INV. 1898.



NEW YORK:
G. W. Carleton & Co., Publishers.

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To

THE FIRST ABLE-BODIED PURCHASER,
THIS INSTRUCTIVE
AND VALUABLE VOLUME
IS
ARTFULLY DEDICATED,
IN THE FOND HOPE
THAT THE AFORESAID,
BEING MUCH CHEERED BY ITS PERUSAL,
WILL, IN CONSEQUENCE,
IMPART TO ALL HIS FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS—
INCLUDING INDIANS NOT TAXED, AND OTHER STRANGERS—
HIS NEW DELIGHT;
THEREBY AROUSING THEIR CURIOSITY
TO SUCH AN EXTENT,
THAT THEY, BECOMING PURCHASERS,
WILL INCREASE THEIR STORE OF
USELESS KNOWLEDGE
AND INFLATE THE CURRENCY
OF
THE AUTHOR.

932710

A PRELIMINARY UTTERANCE.



It is usually the custom of ardent, as well as temperate friends, to become apologists for an author when first he appears before the public in the character of a literary acrobat. In this instance, however, the writer proposes to deal with the matter in person, and to take his life in his own hands.

The following articles, having led a somewhat vagrant life in the newspapers in days gone by, have at last been gathered together in a condensed and readable form, and are now offered for sale at the lowest price consistent with a large profit. Many of these vagabonds have been reformed, and intend to lead a new life; others placed in a state of probation, and some totally annihilated.

The Pine Grove Letters were originally written in the attempt to reform the world; but the sub-

ject and the author becoming simultaneously exhausted, and the world, to all appearance, still proceeding in the same destructive course, they were regretfully abandoned, and the disgusted intellectual architect sought other fields and pastures new.

Should these sketches succeed in making two laughs grow where only a single grin heretofore existed, the author would be pleased to ascertain the fact at an early period. He would like to be rejoiced in this manner exceedingly, and would feel that he had not lived and lied in vain.

BROCKPORT, N. Y., *August 1, 1875.*

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PINE GROVE LETTERS.

LETTER I.

AN INDEPENDENT DAY AND A CELEBRATED PROCEEDING.

PINE GROVE, N. Y., *July 5.*



AS we had a regular time here yesterday ; some of our people wished me to write you a few lines, and let you know what Fourth of July means out this way. Having had no regular celebration for many years, we determined to have one, and a committee was appointed to collect funds and such like. Tommy Jones, the tavern-keeper, the principal man in the place, put his name down for \$5, which greatly encouraged the committee. Deacon Amory gave \$2, on the understanding that his son, who is about to graduate at your highest school, should deliver the oration, and what with one and another the committee succeeded in raising \$34, and at once sent a man to Rochester to buy fireworks.

The choir of the Methodist church volunteered to sing, Miss Evaline Dore was appointed to read an original poem, Parson Wilks to pray, and George Low, the lawyer, to read the independent declaration. The sexton agreed to ring the bell at sunrise, or as close to it as he could, and the boys in the blacksmith's shop to fire off the anvil when so disposed. The procession was to march from the tavern to Perin's orchard where the exercises were to take place. This arrangement did not meet the approval of T. Jones, who wanted the thing to go off in the street, and he demanded his money back. He wanted it close to the tavern, as he thought it would make business livelier. He afterward consented to a compromise that after the oration the procession should march back to the tavern. The arrangements all completed, we waited in anxiety for the coming of the day that came at last. The old church bell was completely pealed at daybreak, and the way the boys made that anvil zip, having stayed up the night before to be on hand, was a caution to window-glass, which suffered according. The Stars and Stripes was swung to the breeze off from a pole on the tavern, and Johnny Siser and Pat Sweeny set up a stand on the corner for selling

lemonade and things. At precisely ten o'clock the procession formed in the street under the command of Capt J. B. Long, who was a soldier once, and moved as follows at the word go :

Capt. Long on a horse.

A fifer.

Another one.

Four snare drummers.

Two base drummers.

Orator.

Reader.

Parson Wilks.

Poet on a pony.

Citizens.

The ground was soon reached, it being just around the corner, and the performers took their places on the stage. Parson Wilks made a prayer, which was a little tedious, but of good character, and contained no allusion to politics, as several Democrats had bet. The choir then sang America, Miss Spraker presiding at the melodeon, George Low then read the Declaration, explaining it as he went along. Then the band played "Hail Columbus" with a good deal of melody. The poet, Evaline Dore, recited an original poem—I have forgotten the name—written by Longfellow,

or some one else. Afterward the choir sang the "Star-Spangled Banner," and the crowd cheered considerable. Then Jimmy Amory delivered the oration, which was real nice, and showed his education. Some of the girls threw bouquets at him; but as they did not reach the stage they were appropriated by other persons into whose hands they fell. The audience were much disturbed during its delivery by certain persons, whose names are known, and which can be given if necessary, going to the tavern and coming back with considerable noise. Some of these persons went two or three times, more or less, pretending they wanted to see a friend. The oration was about three hours long, and was considered as somewhat too lengthy. As soon as Jimmy had finished, the boys shot off the anvil five or six times, the band played a piece, the choir tried to sing, but couldn't on account of the crush of the people, so the procession marched back to the hotel, where it was dismissed by Capt. Long with a few remarks which only a few fortunately heard on account of the noise. In the evening the fireworks went off, consisting of Roman candles, spinning wheels, chasers, which made the girls squeal some I tell you, blue lights, and another

one whose name I do not remember. The performance concluded at eleven o'clock, and everybody says they never had a nicer time. Tommy Jones, he says he hasn't had a better trade in a year, and considers the \$5 with which he headed the subscription list well invested.

Truly yours,

R. S. TRUEMAN.

LETTER II.

DONATION PARTY—WHAT WAS PAID AND WHAT
WAS PLAYED—MORE FUN THAN FUNDS.

PINE GROVE, *July 11.*

E had been considering for some time about giving Parson Wilks a donation, particularly as he had been hinting pretty strong for two or three years that the annual sum of \$300 wasn't very much to do business for, and other churches gave donations, and he didn't care about being made an exception to the rule, and, with this and some other things he let fall, we concluded that he wouldn't decline something of this sort if offered in a proper spirit and in a becoming way. So we sort of talked the thing up, and concluded to give him a lift, and have a little fun out of it ourselves. The women did up the baking and cooking and fixing things to eat, and the men examined

their pocket-books to see how much would be left after giving the smallest bill in them. So last Saturday we sent word down to the parson that we were going to give him a surprise party, and to get ready for us, and he said he would try and be at home. When night came some twenty of us went over with baskets of provisions and other things that we reckoned might come handy in the family. The folks were very much surprised to see us, of course, and had all their lamps lighted, and the house looked quite scrumptious-like. The women adjourned to the kitchen to unpack, and the men talked to the parson about crops and things, and he looked quite pleased and delighted, and said he was glad to see us. The folks kept dropping in until the parlor was full. After a little the younger boys and girls played "snap and catch 'em" until the girls had been kissed enough, and then they sat down in a circle and tossed a handkerchief from one to the other, saying, "I send my ship to you loaded with B," and the one to whom it was thrown had to say "barley," or "beans," or some other word beginning with B, or be judged, and no one was allowed to say the same word twice. When B was exhausted, they went along down to &, when

the game went by default. I never saw the game played before, but it made lots of fun, I tell you. The older people got into a corner and talked about the rest very comfortably. Pretty soon Jimmy Amory came in, and in a little while we all got quiet while he presented the money to the parson, together with a few remarks. The people crowded around so that I could only catch a word now and then, such as "beneficent," "shepherd of the flock," "beatitude," "crystalline," "balmy," "patriarch," "undying gratitude," "the inclosed," etc. The purse was well filled, but mostly with coppers, which weighed heavy, but didn't count up very fast. The whole of the sum total was \$12.42, which was doing very well, considering, but not so well as many expected. As soon as this part was concluded some one said supper was ready, and presently nearly everybody said it, and it wasn't a very long time before the people found out where it was. I judged from the way they acted that the amount of provisions left uneaten would scarcely afford nourishment for the parson's family for any considerable time, and I guess he thought so himself, though he encouraged them all to eat, and set them a pretty good example too. At 10 o'clock we all went

home and determined to have another donation next year a little later, when apples are ripe. I will try and send you an account of it.

R. S. TRUEMAN.

LETTER III.

LIFE RECORD OF A WONDERFUL MAN—INGENUITY
GOD-FATHER OF INVENTION—NECESSITY IN THE
RÔLE OF LEADING LADY.

PINE GROVE, *July 14.*



HERE is a person who lives in our village, and his name is Klinker, of whom you may have heard. This Klinker sets himself up for a born genius, and is as much that as anything else. His particular and best hold is invention, and he certainly is one of the most ingenious fellows I ever knew or read about. He is one of the lions of Pine Grove, and every visitor who is shown around the town is taken to see Klinker just as much and as certainly as Tommy Jones's tavern is visited. I wish I knew as well how many people have been to see Klinker as I know where he lives. The number would be astonishing. He is usually a genial sort of chap, but pretty high-strung sometimes, and says Pine Grove isn't the place for a man of his calibre.

It is too far from Rochester, and takes too much time to get there and back, which place, according to him, is the very hub of the universe. This Klinker has invented a great many wonderful things, many of merit, a few of no use whatever, and he has never availed himself of the privilege to patent and sell. Like most other inventors, his mission ends with the idea, or extends no further than a rude model, which is thrown away for something new. The most practical thing he has done lately is a wheelbarrow with a wheel and handles on both ends, which enable it to go either way without turning it around. He has just finished one, and it works nicely, and he proposes to sell all he can the coming year. He got up a shovel with a hoe on the other end of it, which was very handy for gardens. He set himself to make a waterwheel, which, in addition to furnishing power, pumped the water back into the pond and prevented waste. With this wheel, it made no difference whether the season was a wet or a dry one; but he sort of failed on this. He made a watch that had the least machinery about it I ever heard of. There were two springs of different tension, two wheels, and an hour and a minute hand, and he thought he saw his for-

tune in it. But he didn't, for, although the hands went around the dial, they couldn't keep correct time worth a cent, and he tinkered at the thing most a year. He got up an instrument which he called a luxometer, which measured the degrees of light on the same principle that a thermometer denotes the degrees of heat. It was a useful thing, especially for dark nights, and a person could tell by it how safe it was to travel fast in the night. It was graded from 0 to 50. Zero meant the clearest sunlight, and 50 blacker than tar. Before he got it fairly in running order he up and quit it for something else. He turned his attention to fruit jars, and succeeded in making one that he intends to exhibit at the next county agricultural horse-trot. He struck it that time, for, without exception, it is the neatest, most simple, secure, and all-right-every-way fruit jar I ever saw, and I have had experience in every kind, from family jars to Jar-vis Lord. He took a common quart glass jar, made a hole in the side of it and fitted in a fancet air-tight. Then he filled it with fruit just as it came from the bushes, fastened down the top, put his mouth over the end of the faucet, sucked out all the air, and turned the stop-cock tight. The fruit will

keep for any length of time. Air decomposes fruit. (I guess that's the right expression.) Take away this element and the fruit must remain good until air reaches it. It can't help it. When you want to open the jar, turn the faucet and let in the air. I am acting as agent for the sale of these jars, and will fill orders for the same as soon as we can send to Rochester by the mail-carrier for another dozen faucets. This Klinker got up an improvement on stoves which will be appreciated by all truly loyal housekeepers and men of families, and will save considerable swearing during house-cleaning. How did he do it? Simply by putting castors on the legs, so the stove could be moved about like a wagon, without lifting. He made a glass watch for repairers, which magnified the works of the watch, but would not magnify the workman's fingers nor the tools he might be using. He manufactured some ink that dries the moment it touches the paper, and saves wear and tear of insurance blotters. He got up a self-sharpening lead-pencil, and the point never breaks at unexpected times, with a cast-iron head that will not wear out by chewing on it. He made an improvement on oil lamps, so that the smoke and consumed wick, by an inge-

nious process, are condensed into oil, and run back into the lamp. He got up a combined agricultural implement, which ploughs, harrows, and sows at one operation. He made an instrument for manufacturing pies and cakes, which works completely, and which will run half an hour without re-winding. He invented an apparatus for catching the smoke from chimneys and converting it into lampblack in three minutes at an immense profit. He contrived a pair of spectacles for near-sighted horses for road travel and general use, and hopes to introduce them to an appreciating public at an early day. He uses the same contrivance on vicious cattle with wonderful success. A cow in the habit of jumping fences can be cured completely in one operation. The cow with the spectacles on takes a notion to jump the fence into the next lot, where there is better eating, or maybe there isn't. The cow can't tell till she tries it. She comes to the fence, which in reality is about four feet high. The spectacles make it appear twelve. The cow takes one look through the glasses, concludes it won't work, is somewhat astonished, and goes to grass again. I can't think of half the things that Klinker has invented, and he goes on so all the time. He is a

buster, and that's about as big a compliment as I ever pay anybody. Things are quiet here since Parson Wilks' donation.

R. S. TRUEMAN.

LETTER IV.

APOLOGY—THE TRUE INWARDNESS OF A SEWING
SOCIETY—GENERAL INFORMATION.

PINE GROVE, *July 19.*



I AM sorry I wrote you about Klinker last week, for on Sunday, while I was refreshing myself at Tommy Jones's, K. came in with the *Chronicle* in his hand, and pointing to my letter in it, said hysterically, "Is that your work?" He looked so fighty about his eyes that I said, "How?" and declined at once to answer. But this only added oleaginous fuel to his fire of wrath, and the way he went on was fearful. He said I was his enemy, going about in sheep's gray clothing; that I had made his best productions public property, and he saw the preserved fruits of twenty years of labor going to decay, and I was the exclusive author of all this misery. I tried to pacify him, but he kept getting redder in the face and more abusive of tongue, and finally,

after telling me to go to a certain place I need not more particularly specify, but which I cannot think of in such warm weather without being thrown into a state of violent perspiration, he tore the newspaper in pieces and trampled it under his feet. He then went away. I concluded from this that the partnership existing between him and myself was let out, and he can take his old wheelbarrows, his fruit-jars, his stoves and near-sighted spectacles out of my barn within a month, or he will hear of something not particularly of advantage to himself or his chattels. I suppose you want to hear the news from Pine Grove. The place is growing some and improving a little. Mr. Adams has been painting his fence a drab color, which gives it a fine appearance. Mrs. Stringer has had two new boards put into her sidewalk. Mr. Dany has been mending his way similarly by putting in a few shovelfuls of dirt in a hole where the water used to settle. Mr. Low has had his conductors fixed, which greatly improves the appearance of his house on the east side. Mr. Robinson has put in two new pickets in his front gate and expects to make other alterations during the coming fall. Tommy Jones has had a new spout put on his pump in front of the

tavern, which needed it badly, and has bought some smaller-sized glasses for his bar. The latter movement has created considerable excitement, and a rebellion is momentarily expected. William Scroon has been patching up his roof so that it looks like a big checker-board. He has also made a new hole in the hitching-post before his house, the old one having worn out. So you see that the Grove is flourishing, and property has advanced considerably in consequence of the late improvements. A regular meeting of the sewing society was held on Monday afternoon, as soon as the women got their washing out, to talk over matters and things, and particularly about the foreign war. The attendance was large, and the proceedings animated, in consequence of a few old ladies whose grandsons were liable to the draft, and who wouldn't stand corrected on the fact that the United States were not subject to military duty on account of French and Prussian imprudencies. The subject of Mrs. Scroon's new bonnet, and her daughter's parasol, came up for discussion, and a fortunate thing it was neither of these ladies was present. The consequences might have afforded a theme for a funeral oration. Mrs. Harris and Mrs. Wiley had a set-to as to whether Miss

Dany's new mantilla was cut bias or how. Young Amory was reported as having gone home with Ann Eliza Wren from church the night before, and with hanging over her father's front gate longer than politeness or necessity required. An investigating committee was appointed to circulate the news, and to make inquiries how long this thing had been going on. After a good deal of tea the society adjourned, mentally and physically refreshed. Crops are coming in bunkum. Farmer Smith says if the yield holds out he will have as much wheat per acre as he did last year, but if it doesn't, he won't, and he can't tell certainly till he finds out. Farmer Bowen says he shall have from 150 to 400 bushels of oats, and calculates to make more cider than usual on account of his son coming home to stay next winter. Cucumbers will turn out well. The butter and cheese crops are promising, and eggs are looking finely. I guess that's about all there is to write. This affray with Klinker has unsettled me. I remain sadly yours,

R. S. TRUEMAN.

LETTER V.

A BEASTLY AFFAIR—CONSULTATION OF THE INNOCENTS—DOGMATIC EXHIBITION OF CANINE SAGACITY.

PINE GROVE, *July 25.*



OWING to the various accounts in the New York *Weekly Tribune*, the St. Louis and San Francisco papers, concerning the extreme prevalence of mad dogs, the town board here thought it best to take a little action on the subject, if only for the sake of appearance; so they passed an ordinance that all dogs in the town be muzzled or walk up and be shot. The result of this movement, as might have been anticipated, was, that a call was immediately issued for an indignation meeting among the dogs. The call was freely circulated among the adjoining towns, and the meeting convened last Saturday night at the square in front of the Methodist church. The dogs began to assemble at midnight. A numerous delegation from abroad were present to wit-

ness the proceedings and tender their aid and sympathy. At 1 o'clock the meeting was called to order by Lame Jack, who presented the names of Mr. Bow Wow for chairman and Mr. Howler for secretary. Mr. Bow Wow begged the audience to accept his thanks for such unmerited honor, and said he would endeavor to deal impartially on all questions submitted to him. He said it was high time for action to be taken. Self-preservation is the first law of dog-kind. If the so-called superior animal, man, dared to make laws whereby the rights of his hearers were trampled upon, it was their duty to resist them. Remember John Brown and the Boston tea-party. (Here the audience wagged their wigglers with intense approval.) On motion, a committee was appointed to draft resolutions, and the chairman named Slim Harry, Fido, and Jo as such persons. These gentlemen then retired around the corner of the church with a sheet of paper and a lead-pencil. Fighting Jim wished to enter his solemn protest against being muzzled or shot. He had served his country faithfully, had fought many battles with success; and for his part he would never, no, never, consent to be muzzled. If we must die, let us die like men—he begged their pardon, like dogs—

unpolluted with any such fancy contrivances as wire baskets or buckled straps. (Tremendous kiyis.) Mr. Snarler said that he would counsel strong action. We must be united in this matter. We must pull together. For what says the poet?

“In onion there is strength.”

Therefore let there be onion among us. Let us lay our hands upon our hearts, and with the cry of justice on our lips, march on to victory or death, particularly the former. (Here Mr. S. bowed and the audience bow-wowed.) Mr. Growler desired to make a few remarks, which, although somewhat foreign to the question in hand, were, nevertheless, of vital interest to all. He wished to call attention to the deterioration in the quality of mutton. He admitted that the prior question, that of self-defence, was worthy of attention, and had been ably discussed, but here is something of equal importance. *Revenons a nos moutons.* Farmers take less care of stock than formerly, and, as a result, the meat is less juicy and nourishing. A friend and himself had sampled several flocks this season, but he found everywhere the same result. He desired the meeting to take action on this subject. (Great sensation.) The chairman

remarked that the subject, unquestionably, was one of great importance, but he should be compelled to decline entertaining it until other matters of more transcendent interest had been disposed of. This announcement created considerable disturbance, and the friends of Growler showed their teeth, and made proposals of an unpacific nature to a few shaggy veterans who backed up the chairman. The efforts to get up a muss were promptly growled down, the chairman declared the proceedings decidedly out of order, and said that the committee on resolutions had filed their report with the secretary, who would now present it for the consideration of the meeting. The secretary, Mr. Howler, then begged the indulgence of the audience, and putting on his eye-glasses read as follows:

Whereas, The so-called authorities of this so-called town have issued a so-called decree concerning the interests of a large class of the animal family; and

Whereas, We are the identical ones whose interests are thus affected; therefore be it

Resolved, First: That we won't stand any such nonsense. Second: That we mean war to the teeth, and the teeth to the bone. Third: That we

regard the act as unconstitutional, and as demanding the attention of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. Fourth: That we hereby agree to unite ourselves as a band of brothers, into a union, for protection, aid, comfort, and assistance, and for these ends and purposes we pledge ourselves, our heirs, executors, and administrators, now and forever.

Slim Harry moved the previous question on the adoption of these resolutions, and the chairman announced as the result of the vote all eyes and no noses.

A select quartet then entertained the meeting with a bacchanalian melody, entitled "A Whine Song," which was executed in the highest style of doggerel. At this juncture several of the neighbors, who had been unable to sleep on account of the enthusiasm of the convention, made a grand sally upon the ground with clubs and pitchforks, and the meeting at once adjourned without form.

R. S. TRUEMAN.

LETTER VI.

GREAT UNMATCHED GAME OF BASE BALL—THE
BASEST I EVER SAW PLAYED.

PINE GROVE, *August 1.*

AST Saturday three fellows from your city came over to visit Jimmy Amory. You see, they became acquainted with him at your highest school, and, perhaps, studied out of the same geography with him. Anyway, over they came Saturday morning, and they brought a wooden box with them like a fruit-crate, which had some long-handled beetles in it, some bent wire, two painted sticks, and a number of wooden balls with stripes on them. Besides that, they brought a keg which contained what they were pleased to call liquid refreshments, and I guess it was. After they had put up their horses at Tommy Jones's they went over to Amory's, and I did not see them again until afternoon. Word

was sent around, however, that they were going to play a game of ball on the green in front of the meeting-house at 2 o'clock. The population accordingly turned out to see the sport. At the appointed hour the young men appeared upon the scene, and the first thing they did was to set the keg on the meeting-house steps and drive a faucet into it. Considerable interest was manifested in this movement by different persons, which was natural. We bear no antipathy toward faucets. The young fellows then put the bent wires into the ground in different positions, drove a stake at each end of the plat, and then chose partners. Not hearing their full names, I can only give their first names, which may seem disrespectful, but how can I help it if it does? A fellow named Charlie paired off with Jimmy Amory, and one called Jack with the other one, named Bill. Then, to commence the game, they filled up some tumblers with handles to them out of the keg, and, clinking them together, swallowed the contents in a masterly way astonishing to behold. Charlie then put his wooden ball near the first stake, hit it with his beetle, and sent it through two of the wire hoops, went after it, and turning around in a graceful way, sent it up in front of another hoop,

which he called position. Then Jack went through the same performance, only he tried to hit Charlie's ball, but missed it, struck a stone, when it bounded back and hit a little boy on the nose who was lying on the grass, and made it bleed. First blood for Jack and another game of bawl at the same time. Intermission of a minute, when they all went to look at the keg, and Bill said the drinking reminded him of the song, "When the swallows homeward fly." And they all laughed. Jimmy Amory then hit his ball, but it did not go through any hoop, and they cried, "Out on the first." Jimmy didn't like it at all, nor any of us, because we wanted to encourage home talent. Then Bill, he hit his ball, and drove it through two hoops, struck it again and pinked Charlie's ball, which he sent a long way off—into the middle of next week, he called it. Then he went through another hoop, shot for position in front of a side hoop, and retired in the direction of the meeting-house steps. To shorten the description and make it plain, Charlie hit Bill and sent him to the left field; made a hoop, hit Jack, who hit Bill, who missed Jim, who pinked Bill, who struck Charley, who shot Jack, who didn't hit Jim, who fizzled. I have explained the moves as well as I can, and hope it is

clear. The game lasted about an hour, and the lager, which I am given to understand was the name of the beverage used, about the same time. On inquiry of your young citizens, I learned that the game was called k-r-o-k-a, although I believe it is not spelled in that way. They assured me that the game could not be played successfully without the lager; that it was the spiritual and essential part of it, and on that account chiefly it was extremely popular. It was very healthy (they referred to the lager), and very exciting (they alluded to the game). The young men, at the request of several of our prominent personages, sang a few songs from the meeting-house steps, such as "Bonny, fill up the jowl," "We won't go home till morning if we can help it," "Chaplain Kinks of the mare horsines," "Then you'll rememe-e-ember-r-me-e-e," and a few other sacred songs. I somewhat regret this, from the fact that, since they left, all the whistles in the village have been going "from early morn till close of day," as a poet has beautifully said, trying to get the run of those tunes. It is somewhat painful to a sensitive person like myself to witness and listen to their efforts. Your young citizens went away safely late in the afternoon, and were ushered out

of town by the shouts of the populace. This morning Klinker called to see if I wouldn't go snucks with him on a new arrangement for croqueting. He proposed to use a beetle with a spring to it, so when you touch the spring the ball would move with greater velocity. In case this didn't work, he thought he could use an air-gun for shooting the balls, and dispense entirely with the beetles. After the outrageous treatment I had suffered at his hands, I respectfully declined snucking with him.

R. S. TRUEMAN.

LETTER VII.

IN WHICH PARSON WILKS IS DELIVERED OF A
SERMON.

PINE GROVE, *August 22.*

 DO not know whether an apology is in order for apparent neglect in keeping you posted about affairs down here. I understand (and the whole world should appreciate) the necessity of a complete record of current events, and Pine Grove is expected to, and does, furnish its quota of incidents. But sickness and distress are more frequently drawn in the great lottery of life than health and happiness, and of course I drew one of the common prizes. Two weeks of illness, accompanied with a consciousness of unperformed duties, will incline any one to blasphemy, and I am confident that Dr. Plum received his share of gentle epithets. Not that I am usually profane, but when I order my physician to cure me in one week and he takes two, I should like to know how

one can avoid speaking feelingly. Therefore my temporary absence from your genial columns must be ascribed to my temporary absence from health. So I make my humble confession and proceed to business. Parson Wilks delivered a fine sermon yesterday on "the wicked conduct of the foreign war," and I crawled out to hear it. He said that the war was actually begun, that gentlemen or ladies might cry peace, peace, until they had the bronchitis, but there was no peace. (P. Henry.) He said there must be no double-shuffle in this matter; we must take sides in this emergency. He thought Napoleon's best side was suicide. Still, people who could not think alike must think differently, and where opinions were not the same there must be a difference in opinion. The French had aided us in 1776, the Germans had sympathized with us in our late rebellion. Whom, therefore, shall we serve? Under which King, Byzantium? (W. Shakspeare.) The way it seemed to him now, the French had taken too much Prussic acid and were suffering for their carelessness. War was a terrible thing viewed in its happiest light. Sometimes men were shot. Not unfrequently somebody got hit. Sometimes their limbs were torn asunder and naught remained but the

life of a wandering minstrel going about with a roaring hand-organ seeking whom he may devour somebody. Should Prussia be successful the French will have fought in vain ; should France triumph, Prussia will have failed to accomplish what she desired. Whom, therefore, shall we serve ? The next gale that sweeps through the Atlantic cable will bring to our eyes an account of more bloodshed, provided another battle shall have been fought. Oh, my brethren and others, let us think of these things ; and thinking, take courage ; and being courageous, act, and acting, do something. The sermon was a fine production, and when the sexton had awakened all the sleepers, except those who preferred to sleep until the contribution-box had passed them, the choir sang an appropriate hymn to the tune of "Shouting the battle-cry of," etc., and the meeting adjourned.

LOCAL ITEMS.

I learn from the family that Jimmy Amory is going to be married this week in flying colors ; but as I promised never to tell, I will keep my promise, or, breaking it, make another just as good.—Mr. and Mrs. Dany (his wife) set out on a

tour to Rochester, and returned all right the next day, after a pleasant trip. They report many people "on the git," to use a familiar expression. They found the travelling quite dusty on account of the condition of the roads.—Wm. Jenks and Joseph Bunker went on a pedestrian excursion to the lake, Thursday, where they enjoyed themselves hugely, returning the same evening. No one else has excursed that I know of. It is astonishing how much good is done by a summer jaunt like that of Dany or William and Joseph. Health is restored, strength is gained, and we once more return to our daily labor just as if nothing had happened, so to speak.—A little scrimmage occurred at the tavern Saturday night, in consequence of a misunderstanding about the regular price of plain drinks. The fighter was quieted by knocking the breath out of him, which proved effectual.—The Sunday-school is going to picnic on Wednesday. Not being invited I shall take pains to be there. I'll let them know—(Here our correspondent's manuscript becomes illegible, in consequence, no doubt, of intense excitement, and the working up of his feelings to an exalted pitch).—Klinker is throwing himself on a new-fangled cannon, and has shot one side

of his house off experimenting.—Tommy Jones's chimney was discovered on fire Friday, and there was a large turnout in consequence. A man was sent to Rochester after a steam fire-engine, but was recalled on ascertaining that the fire went out itself. No damage was done. More scared than frightened.

R. S. TRUEMAN.

LETTER VII.

THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL PICNIC; PROVING THAT THE
WAYS OF SOME PEOPLE ARE PAST FINDING OUT.

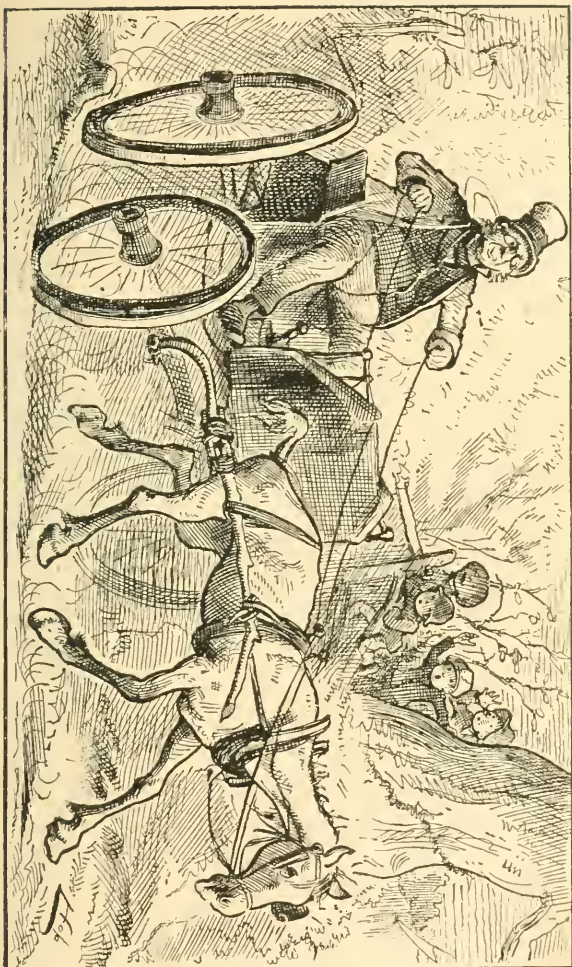
PINE GROVE, *August 29.*

S I wrote you in my last, the church was to have a picnic, and on Wednesday it came to pass. I am sorry you were unable to read and print what I had to say when I mentioned that I had not been invited. The abuse I received has been terrible. Everybody says my letter was originally written pitching into the society rough-shod, and that you declined to publish that part, pretending you could not read it. So I have had to catch it for what was not printed, as well as for what was. The way the coals of fire were heaped on my head Wednesday was enough to make a Hottentot agonize. If you compel me to be present and report all these picnics you will have to find another correspondent. I have no doubt Fox's Book of Martyrs is tolerably correct, but I will add my personal

testimony that the tortures and sufferings experienced by the ladies and gentlemen therein mentioned were joy and delight compared to what I have undergone. So you may make up your mind that I did not have a very pleasant time. I went over to the church in the morning, forgetting all about my unfortunate letter, hoping to catch a ride to the lake with the rest of them. Nobody spoke to me. I said "Good-morning" to one, and "How do do?" to another, and the more I good-morninged and how-do-dood the more they didn't, but kept looking elsewhere, and talking among themselves, and turning their backs on me. Such an amount of backsliding as was performed for ten minutes I have never seen equalled. Pretty soon I spoke to Abbie Long, and said, "Why is this so-so?" when the pert young lady replied, "My ma forbids me to speak to anybody that writes lies to a newspaper," and wriggled away scornfully. This was an eye-opener, and I began to understand the cause of my ill-treatment. On going into the church the sexton said, "If you please, sir, Parson Wilks says infidels and ungodly persons are not to profane this church by their presence. Now git, darn ye." I temporarily got. Such a cool

reception somewhat riled my feelings, and I made up my mind that I would go with them anyway. • So I climbed into a wagon and sat down. In a little while the children and their pa's and ma's came out of the church and commenced to get into their conveyances. A great big fellow approached me in an insinuating way and said, "I don't care about a fight so early in the morning, but if you don't climb out of that machine in exactly two seconds, I'll make you in another." I got out with a second to spare. The result was that no one would let me ride, and it began to look as though I should take no part in the festivities. By this time the load of feathers on my camel's back was becoming very uncomfortable, and I had to stand on the church steps and see them all ride away, laughing and giggling at me, with the younger boys gyrating their fingers on their noses in a manner calculated to rend the heart of a being so susceptible as myself. When they had all departed I went over to Tommy Jones with the fire of wrath kindled within me. Tommy, not being an essentially church or picnic-going person, was at home, and to him I confided my grief. Between us we rigged up a rickety old

wagon and a horse almost as rickety, and Tommy made me up a little lunch, to be used in case of further accidents, as he delicately explained. He bade me farewell with a tear in his eye and a furtive smile playing about his mouth, and I gave him a few directions about the disposition of my effects in case the picnickers saw fit to manslaughter me. The horse never having been trained to trot for purses, and being withal independent, with his own notions as to speed, and a will to execute them, it was noon when I reached the lake shore. I was evidently expected, for a delegation of little boys came out to receive me, and I was welcomed with hoots and groans and little extemporaneous songs, beginning, "The Trueman, the ruman, the rix-stix stooman," etc. I drove into the woods with a placid smile on my countenance, hitched my horse to a tree, and began to circulate among the people. My hearing being tolerable acute I was enabled to listen to such expressions as, "There's old Trueman poking down here," "His room is better than his company," "There's one too many here, and it isn't any one that came in the procession either." My reception was far from cordial. While I stood looking on, pretending to be perfectly unconcerned, two young fel-



Mr. Trueman Goes to the Opera. (Page 56.)

lows came to me, and, pleasantly enough, invited me to take a row on the lake. Friendless as I was, I was prepared to second the slightest advances. Out we went in a boat, and I noticed significant glances passing between them. I began to be suspicious that mischief was meant. My suspicions were at once confirmed by a sudden swaying of the boat, and over she went. Now swimming is my best hold, and I struck out for the shore, but my gentlemen were not equal to it, and clung to the boat, bawling loudly for help. A boat was sent out to them, and I enjoyed a hearty laugh while they were being towed in. When dinner was ready I went for my lunch. Not a sign of my horse or my wagon or my lunch was to be found, and what the rascals could have done with them was beyond my ability to imagine. As their cash value was somewhat more than I was able to advance, supposing them never to turn up, I began an unsuccessful search through the woods that lasted until dark, and until the picnic had started away. I footed it bravely home and arrived at Tommy Jones's in a decidedly used-up condition. I found that my horse and wagon had been driven to the barn and left there some time during the forenoon, but Tommy could not tell who did it.

Probably some of the picnickers, to add to my chagrin. Don't I wish I knew who it was! Um-m! I do not think much of picnics any way.—I have no time to make any further explanations, but it is evident enough to me that my Pine Grove letters are getting me into hot water.

Sorrowfully yours,

R. S. TRUEMAN.

LETTER IX.

WHEREIN IS NARRATED A REMARKABLE OCCURRENCE, UNLIKELY TO HAPPEN ON A SECOND OCCASION.

PINE GROVE, *Sept.* 1



PARSON WILKS is a high old chap, and knows more nonsense in ten minutes than I could remember in ten weeks. It so happened last night that I thought it my duty to step over to his house and see if it was true that his hard cider had entirely given out. While I was leading up to the subject in came Jimmy Amory and Captain Long on the same errand as myself. Such is friendship in Pine Grove. While we were wriggling on our chairs the Parson opened his writing-desk and, pulling out some foolscap paper, said :

“I would like to read you a little story I have just been writing,” and before we could say more cider and less talk, he began :

VIRTUE ITS OWN REWARD.

A GENUINE FAIRY STORY.

Once upon a time, and only once, there lived a gentleman by the name of Sliver. Now Sliver was monarch of all he surveyed, and a little more. He had a little kingdom somewhere on the map, and at least 1,100 yeomen bowed the knee before him whenever he requested them to do so, and were his true and loyal subjects. I cannot say whether he ever had a Gessler freak, and stuck up his cap on a pole, and invited his people to make obeisance unto it, but I am quite certain none of them would have acted the part of William Tell, even if he had done so. He had a singular name, but not half as singular as this story is going to be. You may suppose by this that he wasn't very much of a king, and that his dominions were not very extensive, but the fact is he was considerable of a monarch; always prompt in collecting his revenue, paying his debts like a man whenever he felt like it, and never getting into quarrels with his neighbors and gunpowdering them out of house and home. His subjects loved him. It's an awful thing to have 1,100 people in love

with you all at once, but King Sliver somehow got along with it, and Mrs. Sliver hadn't the least particle of jealousy in her nature.

The royal family was a very nice one. It was small, neat, and compact. There wasn't any outside relations either, bothering round and dropping in to dinner when the larder was empty, for the good king had taken particular pains to chop off the heads of a couple of brothers of his, a maiden sister, and a double handful of nephews and nieces, so that he had things pretty much his own way, and wasn't troubled about the crown going outside the family when he died, which he hadn't the least expectation of doing.

There was only one drawback to his happiness, and that was his inability to get hold of another relative of his for the purpose of decapitation. This was his grandmother on his father's side. She was a very peculiar person, this grandmother. She had a great deal of mystery about her, and could put her hand in her apron pocket at any hour of day or night and pull out a fist full of shinplasters, which was certainly a trick worth knowing and a very desirable accomplishment. She was also able to ride a broomstick through the air with ease and celerity, and could turn such wonderful summer-

sets while journeying in this manner that, if she had only consented to travel with a menagerie, she could easily have made her own fortune and that of her employers. But she didn't go much on circuses.

These things were all well enough, perhaps, but she had several other habits which were by no means to be approved. For instance, she was able to crawl through a key-hole without apparent difficulty, though how she managed it is entirely beyond my comprehension, for she wore No. 7 shoes with double soles. Then again, by the use of some outlandish gibberish which I don't care about repeating, and which I couldn't repeat if I did care, she could transform any human being into an animal, or anything else, which was a very unpleasant thing for the person selected for the experiment.

Therefore it is no wonder that the good King Sliver was exceedingly anxious to rid himself of such a dangerous grandmother, nor is it a matter of any great surprise that he resorted to all sorts of ingenious devices and stratagems to accomplish his purpose. On one occasion he invited the old lady to tea, and she came. You never saw such a polite old fellow as the king was then. So were

the entire family, who were in the secret. But right in the midst of the meal, while they were talking about the last party, and the new skating-rink, and other interesting topics, up jumped the king, struck his left breast a violent blow, and cried out, "Sirrah! seize upon this woman, and convey her to yonder dungeon keep." And when the sirrahs, six in number, came stumbling in to execute the order, what did the old lady do but hop over their heads and go out of the door kiting, muttering something, the meaning of which was not at first understood until six teacups, flying off from the table, fastened themselves upon the noses of the six unfortunate sirrahs before mentioned, and so firmly too that all the king's men and oxen couldn't have pulled them off, even if the attempt had been made, which it wasn't. King Sliver was very much frightened, and tried to break the cups off from the men's noses, but as fast as he broke out a piece another came in its place, and at last the king had to send them away with half a dollar apiece and a promise to pay the doctor's bills, and I have no doubt a fine rumpus was kicked up by their several families when the men arrived home. It isn't very much of a joke to go through life with an unremovable teacup balanced on the end

of your nose. It served them right though, and if they have got into trouble through their misdeeds they must get themselves out. I don't propose to shed any tears or ink to help them.

The family of King Sliver consisted of five members; himself, Mrs. Sliver, the two Misses Sliver, and a young Master Sliver, who was much given to street fighting, and to smoking penny grabs in the stable. King Silver was very economical. He made his wife and the girls do all the housework and the washing and the plain sewing (and there wasn't much of any other kind going on about those premises, I assure you). When they had boiled mutton on Saturdays, which they usually did, you could calculate pretty close as to what the Sunday and Monday dinner would be. He was a regular one, he was. He weighed out the flour and the meal and the butter, and measured the molasses and the rye coffee and the sugar, and he kept a set of household books in double entry, and you can well believe that there wasn't much stealing nor eating between meals going on in that house.

The girls were well educated, considering the dearth of schooling, and were quite good-looking, in which respect they did not take after their

father or grandmother. They had a piano which had come down to them through I don't know how many generations, and when any of the fellows came to call evenings the king used to lock it up and hide the key, for fear the girls would wear it out playing, "Come back, my own heart's love," or "What are the wild waves grumbling about?" or some of those pieces. Not unfrequently, too, this excellent sovereign would blow out the candles, leaving them entirely in the dark as to his future movements or their own, but after a while he found that the more he blew out the candles the longer the young gentlemen remained, so that eventually he gave it up and turned the girls' company out of doors at the respectable hour of nine, precisely.

How they all hated the fairy grandmother! You never saw anything like it. They slandered her; they abused her; they called her names; they would have torn her into pieces if they could have got hold of her and held on. It was hardly a safe proceeding to talk at any length about the absent one, for one afternoon, while the ladies were vilifying her in a vixenish way, down came the grandmother through the stove-pipe and out of the stove door, and squatted on a table, and in-

stantaneously became as large as life. What did the hypocrites do but kiss her, and call her their dear granny, and ask her to take her things off, and stay to tea, and remain all night, and tell her how they had been perfectly wild to see her, the sweet things. Well, the old lady was up to all these feminine dodges, and I suppose she gave them a piece of her mind that they long should have remembered. The effect didn't last a great while. I never knew a blowing-up that did.

She was a shrewd old lady, this grandmother, and was always practising some ingenious joke to work upon the fears of her amiable relatives. She used to get into the boiled pork and cabbage that King Sliver ate so freely, and go down into his stomach, where she raised such an awful row that at last the physician to his majesty always had to be in attendance whenever the king dined upon his favorite dish. Then in the silent watches of the night she used to sit on his stomach and give him the nightmare, and the good king, waking in fearful agony, would swear such terrible oaths that all the people within a mile of the castle would be aroused from their sleep, and lie shivering and horrified, until finally they were obliged to stop up all the key-holes with cotton,

and to wear night-caps with padded ear-laps to shut out such awful blasphemy.

Things went on from bad to worse, and King Sliver began to think that he had acted a little hastily about chopping off the heads of his relations. With his grandmother still alive, all his former work availed him nothing. So, as a last effort, he offered an enormous reward to any one who would deliver the old lady's head to him. Now all the people throughout the land loved their king much, and his money more, and themselves most of all, and, seeing in the great reward a pretty fair speculation, they made a grand hunt after the head, all except the half dozen with the ornamental teacups on their noses. Catch them again, would you? But in spite of all the efforts made the head wasn't forthcoming, and the king was about to commit suicide by eating double his usual quantity of pork and cabbage, which would have done the business to a certainty, when one day, while at dinner, and while roundly abusing his youngest daughter for putting two spoonfuls of brown sugar into her coffee, there came a vigorous ring at the front door-bell, and shortly after the dining-room door opened, and the royal family had the honor of witnessing one

of the most unparalleled sights it had ever been their good fortune, or any one else's, to behold.

You may not believe it, but there stood that fairy grandmother without any head on, and with a big basket in her hands. It was certainly a disagreeable sight, but nothing to what it was when the spectre, speaking out of its neck, said :

“I have brought you what you desired. Hand over your stamps.”

With that the spectre opened the basket lid, and, taking out its own head, chucked it upon the table, where it cut a sorry figure among the teaspoons and salt-cellars and goblets and plates and vinegar cruets. King Sliver ripped out a couple of yards of his favorite oaths ; his wife fainted and slid under the table ; Master Sliver said, “What next ?” and the young ladies grew as pallid as their pocket-handkerchiefs.

Then what did the head do but proceed to lecture the king on his crimes, and his wickedness, and his making the women do all the housework, and, when his royal highness, exasperated beyond endurance, made fearful passes at the head with the carving-knife, the head rolled out of the way, leaving the weapon quivering in the table, and went on talking the same as before.

At last the fairy grandmother reached out, and taking the head from the table screwed it upon her own shoulders in such an artistic way that, for the life of you, you couldn't have told where the joint was. Then, on my solemn word, the old lady took seven other heads out of the basket, and arranged them tastily in a semi-circle on the table, and the seven heads were nothing less than the former personal property of the relatives whom the good king had murdered. How they did give it to King Sliver! Oh, it would have made your hair stand on end to have heard them talk! Then, in some way, the bodies belonging to the heads got into the room, and the fairy grandmother united the separate parts, and there they all were back to life again, and so natural like, talking and smiling just as though nothing had happened.

The king was silent. He saw the joke, but, being a discreet king, said nothing. Then the good fairy went to work and told the king how that his time had come, and that he'd better retire from business. That his kingdom was about to pass into better hands, and that his relations were to reign in his stead, and a lot more talk of the same nature, which went conclusively to show to good Sliver that the circus was about to let out.

Mrs. Sliver, who by this time had recovered from her fainting-fit and crawled out between a couple of chairs, burst into tears; the two Misses Sliver changed color and made spiteful remarks, and Master Sliver, with his hands thrust deep into his breeches pockets, was heard to declare that he'd be highjimmycracked if he stood any such confounded nonsense.

After this, the grandmother fairy metamorphosed the entire royal Sliver family into plaster-of-Paris images and set them all up in a row on the mantel-piece in the dining-room, and, to this day, whenever pork and cabbage make their appearance on the table, it is said that one of the images can be seen to visibly squirm.

Thus did the excellent fairy bring about the cause of justice. If I were disposed I could extract half a dozen gross of moral lessons from this simple story, but I don't propose to do any such thing. If anybody has any doubt of the truth of this narrative, all doubts can at once be removed by believing it.

When the Parson had concluded, Jimmy Amory was nodding, Captain Long sleeping, and myself extremely thirsty, but as this was a feeling I had

become accustomed to, I didn't mind it much. The Parson asked me how I liked the story, and I replied that it was, like myself, a little dry, but could easily be corrected. He said he would do both, and he did.

Fairy-like, yours,

R. S. TRUEMAN.

LETTER X.

PINE GROVE, *Sept.* 5.

PROVES THAT ALTHOUGH MUSIC, UNDER CERTAIN FAVORABLE CONDITIONS, MAY HAVE SUFFICIENT CHARMS TO SOOTHE THE BREASTS OF SAVAGES, YET ON APPLICATION OF THE PRINCIPLE TO THE WHITE MAN, A DIFFERENT ORDER OF THINGS IS LIKELY TO EXIST.

“Double, double
Toil and trouble.”

W. SHAKSPEARE.

 CHURCH choirs, like gunpowder, require to be handled with extreme caution lest they go off, at unexpected moments, in grand explosions, shattering the feelings of everybody within hearing distance. Choirs are troublesome things generally. They are always kicking up some unpleasantness and dividing the people, and when they are not quarrelling with the people and the minister, the people and the ministers are picking flaws with them. I used to sing once

myself in a choir, and very good music we used to make too. I know how it is. Pine Grove to a great extent has been spared this evil, and up to Sunday everything run as slick as a jews-harp. We have had a volunteer choir of twenty voices, and pretty tough voices, too, some of them were. I speak advisedly and without prejudice, for you see since my picnic fracas the church people and I don't go snucks any more. So being an outsider I can express my opinion freely and take sides with nobody. These twenty jubilees have had things their own way for a long time, and, like the Hutchinson family, were strictly a band of vocal brothers. Of course they had their little quirks occasionally, and got jealous, and mad, and quit, and eventually came back all right, but, in general, they have pulled straight. But their voices never chinked together. Such squeaking and grunting as they would get off at times was astonishing. Parson Wilks hinted pretty strong several times that they must do better, but, bless you, they wouldn't mind him a bit. They didn't ask any odds of him. No, sir. Well, Parson Wilks underwent the musical torture until virtue was beyond forbearance. Accordingly he planned a grand *coup d'état*. (That's French, and I know it.)

He went to work on the sly and got up a quartette club, viz.: Air, Evaline Dore; counter, Ann Eliza Wren; tenor, William Long; bass, George Low; Miss Spraker, melodeonist. It was all done up so nicely no one outside knew anything about what was going on. Saturday night the old choir squawked through a rehearsal, the parson actually being present. He wanted to postpone the insupportable, the heavy hour (as Shakspeare gallantly observes), as long as possible. On Sunday morning the new choir got into the gallery in good season, locked the stair door and prepared their hymn-books for action. At last the members of the old choir began to come, and they found something was up, but couldn't tell exactly what it was. Parson Wilks spoke to them, and told them quietly, but firmly, that their services were no longer needed, and that he had arranged for the music in the present and future. Well, now, if you are a better, you can go your foundation dollar on the fact, and win every time, that there were more mad people in the porch of that church than you could shake a stick at. Mad is no name for it. Of all the exhibitions of surprise, indignation, tears, growling, and internal swearing I ever saw, that one took the premium. They could not do anything but

submit, for the gallery door was locked (and a lucky thing it was for the quartette), so at last they filed into the church in a body and sat down. The rest of the people were as much surprised as themselves, and it did not take a great while for the news to spread among them what the matter was. Everybody turned around to look up at the gallery, and some in the back part of the church had to stand upon the seats to see. The new choir had a red face, but seemed to understand its business. The first hymn was sung very well, although every one of the old choir set up such a coughing it was impossible at times to hear the singing. But they could not cough them down. The last hymn was a failure. The twenty songsters down stairs pitched in and sang so much out of tune and time, and discorded so terribly, and all on purpose, that the quartette had to give up the task as a bad job. You ought to have seen the twenty grins on the twenty faces. It was rich, I tell you. Parson Wilks dismissed the congregation at once. In the evening they had no singing, and the parson never gave out the hymns at all. I cannot tell how this thing is coming out, but I know that a first-class social volcano is getting ready to

erupt. If there is as much sulphur about it as about many volcanoes, little harm will be done, for sulphur is good for eruptions. (This is a side joke, but I couldn't help putting it in.) I look upon the whole affair as a sort of judgment upon the society for treating me in the manner they did at the picnic, and I do not care very much how it ends. I believe that there is a punishment on earth, as well as hereafter, for evil deeds done, and here is an illustration of it.

POLITICAL.

We do not go much on politics down here. Sometimes we have a little fight on supervisor or justice of the peace, as we did when I was elected. The people are mostly Republicans and Democrats. The latter are pretty thick around the corners, but grow less the further you get from Tommy Jones's tavern. When I joke on this I always say that demijohn and Democrat are synonymous. A little money goes a long distance here in a political way, and we are anxiously waiting for the county and Congressional nominations to be made. We have got our candidate for Congress picked out, and we are going to do our level best for him. His name is John Klinker.

He and I have settled our little difficulty, and if things work right I shall yet have a government office of some kind. That is the arrangement between us. Mark my prophecy, Klinker is the man. (I put this out as a feeler.)

R. S. TRUEMAN.

LETTER XI.

THE SAME OLD STORY—YOKES STILL EASY.

PINE GROVE, *Sept.* 12.

I HINTED to you some time ago that Jimmy Amory and Ann Eliza Wren were going to hold hands for life, and expected the happy event would come off two weeks ago. But, as usually happens in such cases, the dress-maker, the tailor, or some one else, failed to come to time, and a postponement was the consequence. Last week Thursday, however, everything had been sent home, from Jimmy's new hat to Ann Eliza's shoes, and the necessary preparations made for the marriage feast. All day long the odors of pump-kin pies and boiled beef floated out on the air to the roadside. All day long a few brave spirits decorated the church with evergreens and hung the trees before old Wren's house with lanterns, and, with a forbearance beyond belief, steadfastly re-

fused to answer the thousand and one questions poured into their unwilling ears. All day long a hundred tongues wagged merrily and incessantly ; dozens forgot their dinners in the excitement of the hour, and everybody longed and waited for the coming of the time that should make the dence of hearts an ace. But I grow affecting. At 6 o'clock in the evening three carriages might have been seen, and for that matter, were seen, unloading their occupants in front of the church. First came Parson Wilks, and a minister from your city, whose name I did not learn, but who I understand, is a big gun at preaching. Parson Wilks, with an eye to the division of the spoils, did not appear to like his assistant, and I do not blame him. Getting half where you should have all is an example in short division too hard for contemplation. The bride wore an elegant dress of some gauzy material, white slippers which I did not see, and a bewitching bonnet, a very triumph of millinery art. She had rings on her fingers and ribbons and bows wherever one would stay pinned, a chignon, a fan, and hands incased with gloves. Jimmy had on a new necktie, a tall hat, new clothes and shiny boots, and all the girls sighed when they beheld

him in all his glory. As soon as the procession came up, we made a dive for the church, and filled the seats and aisles in short order. When quiet had been restored the two ministers came in and took their places before the pulpit. Then came Ann Eliza and her pa, Jimmy and Mrs. Wren, Mr. and Mrs. Amory, and a few relations. It was a lovely sight. The air was redolent with the perfume of flowers and scent, the people had put on their goodly apparel, and pleasure reigned supreme. When the contracting parties had been brought into line, Parson Wilks and the city man proceeded to cross-question them in the most approved style, and presently Jimmy and Ann Eliza became two souls with but a single thought, two hearts that beat as one, as a poet (name unknown) has pleasantly observed. The parson then made a few remarks and commented for fifteen minutes, and the city preacher followed him up with a quarter of an hour's advice, when the meeting adjourned. The wedding corps filed out to the carriages, and drove away to Mr. Wren's house amidst the cheers of the boys. Invitations had been given out for the party at eight. I expected to have been able to attend, but circumstances prevented.

I had a great many chores to do about the house ; had been working hard all day, and did not feel very well. So, after thinking the matter over, I concluded that I had better remain away. Besides that, I wasn't invited. This was an oversight, however, for Mr. Wren told me so the next day when I spoke to him about it. He said they made quite a number of oversights. During the evening I went over to the tavern where the sound of fiddles and noise of laughter could be heard coming from Wren's grove. As it was more than I could bear, Tommy Jones and I went out to see the fun, and walked up the road where we could get a sight of the festivities. The grove was lighted up with lanterns, the moonlight was picking its way among the trees, and the people were dancing on a platform that had been built. It was just like the night before the battle of Waterloo. Tommy said he guessed he hadn't time to go in, and as I did not care to, for reasons I declined to mention to him, we sat down on the horseblock and watched the proceedings for some time. It was hard at first to see them drinking their elderberry and currant wine, and feel that there was none of it for Joseph ; but we soon became accustomed to the situation.

The dancing was kept up to a late hour, when supper took place. Tommy Jones got so mad hearing the dishes rattle that he declined to remain any longer; so we both came back to the tavern, and I went home. Altogether the wedding was a great success, and almost equal to our Fourth of July celebration, which I shall always hold in everlasting remembrance.

R. S. TRUEMAN.

LETTER XII.

A DISPLAY OF PATRIOTISM—THE SINGER MACHINE
THE BEST.

PINE GROVE, *Sept.* 28.



SINCE the fall campaign opened I have had but little time to write you. You see, an active politician like myself, in times like these, has his hands full without sending the news. I am hard at work for John Klinker for Congress, and, although I haven't got along far enough yet to report progress, still I flatter myself that I am gaining ground daily. At first nobody went for Klinker but himself; after a little I went for him; and now Tommy Jones says he'll go for him if he don't settle that little bill of his. The fact is, Klinker is neither appreciated nor understood here, and somebody has got to do a large amount of hard work to bring him properly before the public. He won't take any interest in the matter. Whenever I speak to him about it, he says he leaves the matter entirely

in the hands of his friends, and then rushes off to his workshop to execute some new idea that has struck him about machinery or some other fangle. He can have the delegation from this town if he will only come down. I suppose you know what that means. I fear he will not come down, for he can't come down much lower than he is now, financially. I do not despair, however, but await the development of events. There is one thing about it that is much to be regretted. Scarcely a day passes but what a candidate for some office rides over here, and it makes bad work. On Saturday I counted fourteen candidates for Congress, eleven for county clerk, eighteen for county superintendent of the poor, sixteen for Assembly, and every doctor in the district for coroner. So what with their talk, and arguments, and pledges, and buying something for the boys, the community is getting badly demoralized and refuses to listen to the voice of reason.

THE CHOIR.

I wrote you some time ago about the choir and the muss the church people were in, and now it has worked itself around into another shape.

Ann Eliza Wren was the alto in the new choir, but she up and got married, and no one could be found to take her place. The friends of the choir blame Ann Eliza very much for the step she took just when her services were most needed in the singing, and decline to listen to any explanation. George Low manifested such a disposition to sing bass solos all the time that the tenor singer, William Long, got mad and threatened to quit at once unless his feelings were respected. The choir sang two Sundays—all that was left of them—but the bass and tenor sang so loud no one could hear the soprano. As one might say, the soprano voice was drowned in a torrent of fierce melody. The old choir are a little less huffy than at first, and, I think, will work around all right after a while. Parson Wilks is going to fight it out on this line if it takes all the money he can borrow from his friends.

LOCAL THINGS.

The equinoctial storm has been postponed on account of the weather, apparently. In consequence butter has “riz.”—The boys begin to throng around the cider-mill after dark, and the

sounds of laughter and old jokes come floating in on the evening air like chips on a mill-pond.—Dany's horse, Jack, ran away Sunday and broke everything except his neck all to pieces. That's what you get for riding to church on the Sabbath. People that put on airs must expect to have the wind taken out of their sails. Nothing personal intended. Oh, no, I guess not.—Mrs. Stringer is troubled with a bad cough, which the doctor says may lead to a coffin.—The display of northern lights was so brilliant on Sunday night that the boys and girls didn't get home from church until 11 o'clock. It is astonishing how much interest the young folks take in astronomy.

R. S. TRUEMAN.

LETTER XIII.

ARTS AND HANDS—A SERIES OF PRIZE ESSAYS.

PINE GROVE, *Oct. 5.*

IMMY AMORY having been to college and returned unscathed, became struck with an idea, and last week he went around town trying to strike every one else with the aforesaid idea; to wit: a series of literary entertainments founded on horse-trotting, where in the best man should receive the first prize for the best essay, and so on to the worst man, who, in all probability, would receive a blessing. The idea was a complete success, and the striker and the struck, with a fair proportion of interested nobodies, came together last night at Tommy Jones' ball-room, which had been mopped out in honor of the occasion.

There were four manuscripts only handed up, and three of them were furnished by Parson Wilks. It is a sad commentary on the literary

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ability of Pine Grove that one sponge should sop up three-fourths of it. But such are sponges.

Jimmy Amory having unanimously voted himself upon the orchestra platform, proceeded to open one of the manuscripts, and read as follows :

SUMMER REST.

The fervid heat of July melts into the sweltering days of August. If we are going forth into green fields and sombre forests, or where the sea waves chatter on the shingly beach, or where nature's distillery pours forth its life-sustaining waters, which are healthy in proportion to their bitterness, it is high time we were in motion. Later in the season the great crowds that throng the watering-places will have floated home on a high tide of weariness and disappointment, and the places of extortion that rejoiced in their presence will know them no longer. Therefore let us at once gather together our purple and fine linen, our jewelery and personal adornments, and go forth, conquering and to conquer. We will seek the favorite resorts where chiefly we of the fashionable world do congregate; we will swelter in the most compact of little rooms high

upward on the road to the stars ; we will give aid and comfort to rebellion in our digestive apparatus by eating all that is set before us ; we will laugh, sing, dance, grumble, and, mayhap, swear, and at last—ah ! at last—return home and call the suffering we have endured and the tortures we have undergone—recreation !

Ah, me ! This is not summer rest. It is only a suicidal attempt to see and to be seen, at a cost of untold treasure and indescribable vanity and vexation of spirit. My brave associates, partners of my toil, my feelings and my fame ! if rest be thy object, if relaxation from many months of arduous toil be thy design, seek it not where giddy thousands wearily while away the days in feverish excitement, chained to the wheels of fashion's Juggernaut. Rather let thy retreat be where calmness and content abide ; by the margin of our inland lakes ; in the deep recesses of the forests, where, far from busy haunts, you may seek and find that rest of body and peace of soul that fashionable watering-places can never give, but always take away.

At this point Parson Wilks applauded vigorously.

Jimmy Amory then proceeded to read an essay on

THE ART OF BOOK-KEEPING.

Book-keeping, or, the forgetting to return borrowed volumes, is fast becoming one of the amenities of life. What more self-satisfying feeling can take possession of one's soul than the contemplation of a well-stored library, accumulated by the persistent practice of book-borrowing and the steadfast habit of book-keeping? If anything further be needed to complete the state of happiness into which you are thrown by this meditation on literature, it will be found in the delightful thought that all this treasure of mind and matter, this glittering cavern of literary wealth, has cost you nothing. As this ecstasy exists in the mind of the book-borrower, so in an inverse ratio does the halo of sadness float over the soul of the book-lender. Upon his shelves many an empty space denotes the successful charges of the light brigade of literary gormandizers. Many a lovely set of standard works, rich in its blue and gilt, is short a volume or more, and stands a testimony of too implicit confidence on the part of the lender, and a living witness of man's inhumanity to man on the part of the bor-

rower. A favorite book is needed, or a partially forgotten quotation is wanted. The troubled heart rushes to his library, and, after a long search, suddenly remembers that he loaned this particular volume to somebody, but for the life of him he cannot recollect who that somebody is. As a rule, somebody never puts in an appearance. Ah, no! half the enjoyment of borrowing books is lost in returning them, and few are so self-denying as to deprive themselves of a moiety of pleasure when they can have the entire quantity. When the apprenticeship to the noble art begins, the pupil may be troubled with some qualms of conscience about retaining property not his own. But such feelings rapidly wear away, and give place to an anxious solicitude to continue the good work so well undertaken, and, like the busy bee, to gather honey from every opening library. By strict attention to business and a discriminating application to lenders, an excellent collection of books will be procured, one that will enliven the weary hours of the borrower, increase his knowledge and enlarge his understanding, and prove a solace and a comfort to him as he uprightly descends the hill of life.

(Tumultuous applause from Parson Wilks.)

The third production was

AN ESSAY ON FLIES.

From all quarters of the State, and from many regions round about, the cry has gone forth that never before have our little friends, the gentle flies, been so numerous, manifested such blood-thirsty intentions, or conducted themselves with such an air of general recklessness. All remonstrances with them have been in vain, and the "spare the rod and spoil the child" argument has availed nothing. It is certain that the fly of to-day is not like his predecessor. The time has been when flies could readily be caught, could be gently mashed with the fingers, and thrown out of the window with a feeling of satisfaction akin to ecstasy. Now, how changed! In what school did these, our household enemies, learn their lessons of wisdom and cunning? From what instructors did they derive that useful knowledge, that intuitive perception, so skilfully used? Witness their early morning efforts, when long fasting through the dim watches of the night has made them particularly voracious. How they fly about in graceful undulations, with gentle murmurings,

like tiny waves on ocean's shore, or anything else that murmurs similarly, and, at last, the period of murmuring accomplished, they dive for your nose, and perform their little feats of light gymnastics over and on your brow and eyes and cheeks, until it seems, in your sleepy way of thinking, as though ten thousand straws had conspired to tickle you to death on a wager, and had commenced proceedings with a fair show of winning. With feelings far from friendly you make a desperate dash at your oppressor, who is safe enough by the time you have jammed your hand against the head-board, and who presently returns in company with a few friends whom he has called in to see the fun. If you have any idea you can catch them, or having massacred one appall the rest, be forever undeceived! Millions of suffering humanity have been victims of the same idle delusion and have lived to change their belief. A fly, though of little stature, and of the race of hum-bugs, is no fool. He is constantly on the lookout for No. 1; he knows where all the dainties are kept, and always calculates, and never in vain, to have the first taste of everything. My dear madam, who pride yourself upon your excessive neatness in housekeeping, you may wrap

your undevoured joints of meat in snowy napkins ; you may remove your jellies and sweetmeats into dark closets and out-of-the-way places ; you may secure and put away your pies and cakes in any manner that seemeth best to you, but, my word for it, the intellect of the fly will overreach you in a way that passeth all understanding.

At this juncture Parson Wilks was observed to applaud with much vehemence.

The next essay was entitled—

“WHO SHALL DECIDE WHEN HARDWARE DEALERS
DISAGREE ? ”

The universal Yankee will have a great deal to answer for hereafter, particularly in the turning of his attention to stoves. Here are numberless kinds, each claimed by its inventor or disposer to be the *sine qua non* of the housewife's desire, and the *ne plus ultra* of inventive progress. And such wonderful stoves, too ! The sight of a coal-scuttle throws them into a fever, and they shed forth caloric at the scratching of a lucifer. A single ton of coal will suffice them from October until May, and they will burn up all the slate and limestone that the miners choose to leave in the

anthracite. This is the usual story told, with variations for the more incredulous. For the good of the people, some thoroughly posted, wholly unprejudiced philanthropist ought to issue a handbook entitled, "A Guide to Stoves, or Rest for the Weary." With such a publication, setting forth in plain terms the several advantages of the thousand or so different kinds of stoves in existence, one might be able to form an opinion of his own, without being compelled, as at present, to accept the word of an unprincipled, perhaps ignorant dealer. As it is, A cracks up the Excelsior; B runs it down and offers the Family Pacificator; C (who has not the agency for the foregoing) breaks out against both, and confidentially recommends the Panacea. Now what shall we do in view of all these things? That's the question, my lords and ladies. Either A, B or C, or any two of them, or all of them, are deliberate falsifiers and shameless prevaricators, or they labor under the most mistaken of impressions. Who is to set us right in this matter, now that winter is coming on and the new fashion plates for stoves have been published?

At the close of this essay everybody applauded, except Parson Wilks, who, inasmuch as he didn't write it, couldn't see anything applausible in it.

When the noise had become somewhat disintegrated, a small boy, the property of Matilda Hooker, was observed to sidle down the hall and hand a paper to Jimmy Amory. The gallant apostrophe opened it, and after remarking that a new horse had entered for the race, proceeded to read as follows :

ON PRESENTING A BOTTLE OF PERFUMERY TO A
YOUNG LADY.

Of wealth at the present I have none,
My hopes on the future are bent ;
I have naught of gems, nor of diamonds,
And can give thee only a scent.

The glorious fragrance of true love
I feel that thou knowest full well ;
Should'st thou ever require a reminder—
Why, take out the stopper and smell.

Ah, life is but brief and fleeting,
And pleasure's a short sweet song ;
They are like this perfume I give thee,
For I know that it will not last long.

But this casket is not like life's joys,
So mixed with care, trouble, and pain !
For when it grows weak and is empty—
Why, then you can fill it again.

Farewell ! take this gift as a token
Of love, hope, and constancy,
And when thou smell'st it, remember
The one who gave it to thee.

At the close of this scentsless poem Jimmy Amory remarked that it would be impossible to bestow any prizes, inasmuch as three essays were written by Parson Wilks, and the remaining productions appeared to be anonymous, and as a matter of justice—

Parson Wilks wanted justice done though the tavern fell, and called for a division of the house ; but, inasmuch as considerable subtraction was going on, it was deemed best not to add to the difficulty by multiplying words ; and so the meeting adjourned, Tommy Jones confiscating the prizes.

I guess I could tell who it was that wrote the essay about stoves, and the poem. But I am too modest to even hint it.

Bashfully yours,

R. S. TRUEMAN.

LETTER XIV.

KLINKER COMES TO THE SURFACE WHOLLY UNDIS-
MAYED.

PINE GROVE, *Oct. 19.*

POLITICAL.



HAVE dreaded for some time to write you. I have argued the case with my conscience and my sense of duty, and have finally reached a conclusion. The story has gone forth that my political influence doesn't amount to a row of hair-pins. If ill reports will find circulation, it is better that the truth be told by an honest man (that means me) than that lies should go unrebuked. Now, hear me for my cause. Our town committee issued a call for electing delegates to the congressional and county conventions week before last. I had worked Klinker up to his fighting mark, and he had agreed to go in for himself for Congress and secure the delegation from his own town. So when the meeting convened he went to work in his own interest, and

here is how he did it. He got hold of an old codger, who is as deaf as an arithmetical adder, and took him off through the crowd out of sight. He was so energetic and vivacious about it that I felt greatly encouraged, went to work, and in five minutes had received twenty promises to go for Klinker's delegation, viz.: Klinker and myself. Well, they got to motioning and amending and substituting and voting until I lost the run of the thing, and before I knew it both county and congressional delegates had been appointed, and neither my name nor that of John Klinker had been mentioned or appeared on the list. I was mad, I was, and started for J. K. If he had only kept in the bar-room where the caucus was held I know we could have carried our point, but I had not seen him since he went out with the old slab whose name is Milkins. I hunted all over after that fellow through the tavern, and shed and grocery, but no Klinker could I find. At last I thought of his barn and went to it. I found him. He was there. He had old Milkins sitting on a box trying to explain to him about the new stove he had been inventing, and he was as red in the face as the sun in a fog, and perspiring as fearfully as a soda fountain on a hot day,

trying to pound into that old fellow's head how the stove worked, which, being deaf and feeble in intellect, Milkins of course could not understand. The stove is a neat thing anyway, and I do not blame Klinker for being in love with it. The fire department is like a box wood stove. In the centre there is a sheet-iron pipe two feet in diameter which runs up perpendicularly about ten feet. In this cylinder you place a two-foot log of any length. Crowd it down so that it rests on the bottom of the stove. Build your fire and there you have it. As the bottom of the log burns off it settles down and continues burning, just like a base-burning stove, of which I have seen pictures in the newspapers. Klinker calculates that a log twenty feet long will last a month. When the ashes that accumulate weigh exactly fifteen pounds, the weight presses down a spring door in the bottom of the stove, which flies back to its place as soon as the ashes fall out. There is also an ingenious apparatus attached to the stove for regulating the draft and so maintaining an even temperature. It works by the hot air from the stove, and operates similarly to the governor on a steam-engine. When the heat is great the revolving machine runs faster and

shuts off the draft. When the heat gets down, the machine, running slower, opens the draft. However, that don't matter now. I talked to Klinker with tears in my eyes about deserting me in the hour of trouble and injuring his own cause, but he wouldn't listen to me. So I went away, leaving him hard at work trying to drive an explanation about his stove into that old wooden-headed Milkins. I gave up the Klinker job at once. He was too heavy a load to carry. I am sorry that this political business is over here, as I fear it is, unless things run close. It has been meat and bread for some of us.

LITERARY.

The following poem was written by my eldest daughter, and was intended for a Fourth-of-July present to her little sister. Having nothing else, she gave this poetry, which she refers to only as a mere "seratch," which is true compared to some of her other efforts:

CATEGORICAL—PERHAPS PARAGORICAL.

To my little sister on her cat.

I muse upon thy dearest pet—

What fitter theme for me to choose—

And while my fancy takes its flight,

Thy darling kitty also mews.

Ah ! kitty with celestial eye,
And little feet going to and fro ;
Thy mistress fondly says “ my own,”
And thou dost fondly say “ mi-auo.”

Thy kitty is of lustrous hue,
And like thyself sweet sleep prefers ;
Should fortune flee thee, well I know
Thy cat would share with thee his purrs.

Ah ! life is short and peace is sweet,
Why waste them when I wish to live ?
I pause, and like thy kitty's paws,
A scratch is all I have to give.

CROPPINGS.

Apples are our best hold here this season. Plenty of apples makes cider cheap and plenty. We can get along very well without flour, meal and pork as long as cider is abundant, but when apple-juice is dear and scarce, life becomes a burden and a snare. The circumstance is more fortunate on account of the scarcity of water, to the drinking of which many are addicted, but it looks as though they would be obliged to give up their hydropathic practice and come down to hard cider. —Billy Jones run a sliver into his foot on Sunday, which his teacher thinks is a judgment upon him

for whistling in church.—Mrs. Stringer has taken Johnny out of the district school on account of her finding something in his head besides knowledge.—Somebody stole Parson Wilkes' umbrella last week. The parson says whoever it is has got beautifully sold. It is an imitation umbrella and only made to be carried for the sake of appearance, and not for use.

R. S. TRUEMAN.

LETTER XV.

AN EARTHQUAKE IN WHICH EVERYBODY IS SHOCKED.

PINE GROVE, *Oct. 27.*

THE LATE CONVULSION.



PAPER published in your city, says that the last earthquake was not felt in Monroe County last week (Thursday). I desire to say that that statement is all bosh. Rochester is only a part of Monroe County, and the worst part at that, and it was probably considered a sufficient punishment for your city for one day to be obliged to have the Democratic county convention, without heaping up another terror in the shape of an earthquake. So Rochester escaped ; but we had it bad in Pine Grove, which, as everybody knows, is in Monroe County. About 11 o'clock we had our first shake-up, which was only a premonition of other shocks yet to come. It rattled the houses a little, knocked down a few things, and set everything squealing. Tommy Jones was standing in

the tavern door, picking his teeth with a fork, and was thrown violently against the casing, which received him on his nose and bent the fork double. First blood for the earthquake. At first he thought Deacon Amory pushed him, for the deacon was there, having dropped in a moment to take something for his cold, from which he is a constant sufferer and has to medicate himself frequently with Tommy Jones's spirits to keep up his own. Tommy turned himself around as mad as a lunatic asylum and would have fetched the deacon a crack, and in fact did prepare himself so to do, but just then the earth gave another quake, which shook the house and sent them both reeling. This was a severe shock, old Milkins, the deaf man, remarking that he thought the wind was coming up. All the tumblers and bottles in the bar came rattling down, and at least twenty shillings' worth of liquor went to waste. The funniest part, though, was that the convulsion ripped open a closet door, and out tumbled a lot of old traps, and among them was Parson Wilks's umbrella, which I wrote you in my last had been stolen. Deacon Amory winked at me in a facetious way, and I reciprocated. "Upon my word," says Tommy, "here's the parson's umbrella. How queer!" And it was queer.

Then he called the stable-boy and bade him carry the article home, and to say it had been found. Tommy's face was as red as his front door, but he never offered any explanation. It did not need any. In the grocery store, old Mr. Wren had just sat down on a wooden bench, when the second shock came. It was so violent that it cracked open the bench, but it closed right off and caught Wren in it. It was painful to hear his agonizing shrieks, and we concluded that something besides his coat was caught in the bench. He rushed out of doors, dragging the bench with him, and ran round and round in a circle, howling like an Indian, until some one brought an axe and released him. Mrs. Stringer was just yawning when the shock came, and it dislocated her jaw so her mouth would not close, and she was obliged to ride three miles in a lumber wagon over a rough road, with her mouth stretched open to its fullest extent, which is considerable, to get a doctor to shut it. Matilda Hooker was doing up her washing at the time, and the quake set her right down into a tub of hot soap-suds. She didn't remain there for any length of time. Petsy McCracken caught her wooden leg in the sidewalk, which the earthquake caused to close on it, and



SOME SHOCKING OCCURRENCES AT PINE GROVE. (Page 100.)

was unable to stir until Pat Sweeny got a saw and sawed her leg off close to the walk, when the McCracken pegged off, looking like the walking-beam of a steamer in consequence of the inequality in length of her supporters. Melhitabel Jenkins, the schoolma'am, was just punishing a little boy for sassing, and was holding his hand to make ready. When the shock came it threw the boy away, and she hit herself a terrific blow with the ruler on her hand. It must have hurt, for she is an awful blower. Considering the amonut of shaking done, the damage to property will be slight. Fifteen dollars I should judge would set us all right. Four shingles fell off from Mr. Dany's house, and two bricks from George Low's chimney. Eleven panes of glass were broken out of the church, and a dozen were badly damaged. The church trustees had a meeting about it, and concluded to putty up the damaged ones and let the others go, as they would help to ventilate the meeting-house. There were three shocks in all, but the last did no damage. Many thought the world was coming to an end, and were very much frightened. They soon recovered when they found that the earthquake had come to an end. We don't think we

like them, and if this sort of thing is going to be established as a rule, we propose to move into the next county. We cannot afford to take the chances.

Yours in fear and trembling,

R. S. TRUEMAN.

LETTER XVI.

AN ATTACK OF INSPIRATION—A MISSIONARY MAN PUTS IN A DECIDED APPEARANCE—DEMONSTRATES TO A NICETY THAT PEOPLE BEREFT OF EYESIGHT CANNOT DETERMINE WHETHER ALL THAT GLITTERS IS OR IS NOT GOLD.

PINE GROVE, *Nov.* 2.



MY eldest daughter had another serious attack of inspiration last night, with the following result :

LIFE.

Half of the moon shines down on me
To-night, as idly on the gate,
I, swinging to and fro, lament
My useless life and cruel fate.

Ah ! life is all one tedious round
Of washing dishes, mopping floors,
Of baking beans and frying pork,
While such base things my heart deplores.

I want to rise above all this,
And dash to earth the grief it brings ;
Lighter than pie-crust let my soul
Soar far above such grovelling things.

Call you this living—this base kind
Of mere existence—is there not
Some happier clime where folks don't eat,
Where cooking and baking are forgot ?

Oh visions of what ought to be !
Oh fancy free, thy joys are dead—
'Tis useless all, alas ! I must
Go in and knead the needed bread.

Half of the moon shines down on me,
And gently o'er me falls the dew ;
I mustn't stay no longer for
I'm taking cold, and so—atchieu !

That is what I call the essence of true poetry.
I may not be a number one judge of the article,
but it comes up to my standard of what heart-
soothing, soul-subduing, rhythmical composition
should be. The authoress (my daughter) intend-
ed it for the *Atlantic Monthly*, where no doubt,
it would have attracted considerable attention, but
I prevailed upon her to give me a copy, after
sending her to bed in tears, and afterwards find-

ing it in an old writing-book. I want it published where true merit will be appreciated.

AFFAIRS ABOUT TOWN.

On Monday an ancient chap in a rusty suit of black clothes and a tall hat a little old, but still the false tile came over to the grove on a benevolent expedition. He made a little address to the people in the church in the evening. He said he had heard of the generous spirit that pervaded the hearts and homes of the Pine Grovers, and he had now come to put it to the test. He wanted money to buy Testaments for the poor Southern people, who were pretty well used up spiritually, and if he couldn't get money he would take provisions, furniture and clothing, as the aforesaid were pretty well used up bodily. He called upon the women to throw their jewels and fine raiment into the treasury. There wasn't any throwing done, as the women about here haven't very much capital invested in these articles. Then he called on the men to cast in their mites, and when they had done so he found it was a mighty little cast. He then sang a hymn, during which feat all the people who didn't go out when the contribution-box was passed went out, so that the church

was pretty effectually cleared by the time he had finished the first verse. After this the ancient mariner went to the tavern, where the boys made him buy something, and the contribution went the way of all flesh, and they had to put him to bed, not being in any condition to personally superintend that operation. It seems that this enthusiastic man, this benevolent person, this ardent spirit, was no match for Tommy Jones's ardent spirits. Then the boys, being playful, burned holes in his hat with a red-hot poker, which gave it the appearance of a cullender in a bad state of repair. After this they broke open his satchel, in which they found a pack of cards, a bunch of skeleton keys, an empty bottle, and a few letters of recommendation, certifying that the bearer was sober, honest, truthful, and the possessor of all the cardinal virtues, and calling upon the public to furnish such a worthy object all the aid and comfort it could spare to assist him in his benevolent scheme. The next morning he departed at early dawn, with a very unfavorable impression of the people here.—Our citizens have been unable to make up their minds which way to vote, and are ready to negotiate with any responsible party. We are all open to conviction, but it looks as if no one

wanted to convict us. So far, it has been the driest campaign I ever saw.—The damages done by the late earthquake have been neatly repaired, except poor Mr. Wren, who cannot rest easy on his mind or anything else. Klinker is getting up an instrument for foretelling any more quakes, so that in future everybody will have an opportunity to flee to the mountains before the circus commences. His new stove works nicely, and he has cut his entire orchard to furnish wood to run it with.—It's a little dull here now, but next week we are going to have a temperance concert and lecture.

Yours expectantly,

R. S. TRUEMAN.

LETTER XVII.

ANOTHER BATCH OF LITERARY CRUDITIES.

PINE GROVE, *Nov.* 6.

WE could not stand it any longer. Nothing to do but what we must have another trial of speed on the essay question, so Jimmy Amory said if Pine Grove would become amenable to the law of decency, and no party furnish but one essay, he would set the bawl in motion. (Jimmy tries to be funny sometimes in a poor way.) Accordingly he gave notice that the late performance would be repeated with an entire change of programme, and that prizes would be given according to the law of public opinion, as made manifest by a majority of the audience. So last evening Tommy Jones's ball-room resounded with the hum of many voices, until Jimmy Amory said that the resounding must now cease. After the usual scuffling of feet, and clearing of throats, and straightening up on the benches, there came a dead silence, and in the midst of it Jimmy lifted

up his flute-like voice, and read the essays promiscuously as follows :

THE REIGN OF THE ARTIFICERS.

Now that the winter of our discontent has been made glorious summer by the sun that shines for all, the footsteps of an advancing host can plainly be heard. This army of Egyptian spoilers, having hibernated successfully, now begins its summer campaign. This retinue of masons, of carpenters, of painters, of laborers of all kinds and descriptions, refreshed by the new wine of temporary repose, sharpen their implements and prepare to charge. We are prepared to repulse them? By no means. Far from such thoughts, vain world. We welcome them with smiles and also with trembling. We are dependent upon them for good offices. We back our money (all we can raise) against their labor (as little as possible). We will suppose that you are a person of industry and frugality, and that, after many years of toil and perseverance, you have succeeded in becoming sole owner of a sum of money—no matter how much—and that in addition to this, you are possessed of a desire to improve the appearance of your ancestral halls. Your plans are

somewhat vague, but you are supposed to know in general what you want. You take counsel at first with some one who has the reputation of being posted—it doesn't take much capital to acquire such a repute—and you go over with him all the items of improvements you propose to make. Your ineffable genius and lightning calculator makes his figures and announces the result, which will usually be about a third more than you anticipated. However, being a determined character, you are only astonished, not appalled, and begin proceedings at once that the work may go bravely on. You are referred to a mason, who will come next week, or next month, or next any other time, and as he is the only one you can find who will promise to come at all, you close with him at once. You engage a carpenter on the same accommodating terms, and that there be no reason for delay (such vain delusion) order your materials and prepare for action. Everything is ready—all but. Your mason doesn't come to time; neither does your carpenter; neither does anybody else; and you begin to experience what waiting against hope means. If your nature be gentle and confiding, you will graciously accept the situation, and abide

the coming of the rulers in patience, in meekness, and in hope. At last, when everybody else has been thoroughly waited upon, and the last excuse exhausted, your hewers of wood and handlers of mortar put in an appearance. You are not long in discovering that the material you so carefully and expeditiously ordered is not the thing at all; that it will not do; that you ought to have known better; and that Mr. A. B. C., and all the rest of the alphabet except Z, could have furnished you with what was wanted at much lower prices. Your pride being sufficiently humbled, your spirit broken, your suggestions sneered at, your ignorance scoffed at, and yourself put in as great torture as your gentle nature is capable of sustaining, you despairingly tell your jack of trades to go on and push the thing through at your expense and at any cost, in the way that seemeth best to him, and if you have any doubt as to the result, especially as to the cost part, examine the bill that will roll in upon you, and be forever undeceived.

PERNICIOUS EFFECTS OF EARLY RISING.

“ Early to bed,
 Early to rise
 Makes one ”—

[Superaunuated minstrel

The lark is up to meet the sun,
 The bee is on the wing,
 I hear a knock—'tis eight o'clock,
 But to my bed I cling.

[Modern lay.

Whether the authors of the above classical poems speak from experience or draw their conclusions from the observations of other enthusiastic admirers of nature, is a matter of supreme indifference; the probabilities being that the composer was only a night editor whose opinion on such matters ought to be thrown out under the rule. One has only to observe the passengers on a night train when daylight doth appear to form an opinion on this subject. Cross, crabbed, ugly, capricious, fault-finding, snappish, terribly boorish and unwarrantably impolite, what conclusion can the observer otherwise draw than that an early hour is not propitious to the development of the milk of human kindness? Here is another little ditty, with modern improvements taken from the land knows where, and written by the land knows who:

He who would thrive
 Must rise at five.

If this be true, then

Who would thrive more
Must rise at four.

Hence

He who would more thriving be
Must rouse himself at the hour of three ;
And he who would still better do
Must leave his bed at the stroke of two.

Therefore

He who would not be outdone
Must rouse himself at hour of one.

Grand summing up :

Who would do better than them all
Must never go to bed at all—

which neither holds to rhyme nor reason. Now, the last conclusion being fallacious, and the chain of reasoning having been logically followed, the first premise must be wrong, ergo: He who would *not* thrive must rise at five. As for late rising being a waste of time, it is untrue, for those who rise early, retire early, while those who begin the day late take time on the other end of it, and so nothing is lost. And so with Sancho Panza's blessings on the man who invented sleep, and a trivial tribute to Lamb, who once remarked, concerning early rising, that he could make up his mind, but he could not make up his body, the

fruitful theme is left to the ponderings of the wise, the meditations of the wiser, and the calm considerations of the wisest.

TERRORS OF THE UNFORTUNATE.

The number of people who take delight in letter-writing, after a close and unsuccessful count, is estimated at 500,000. The remainder of the inhabitants—somewhere among the 40,000,000—belong to the class whose emotions on this subject are of an entirely different nature. Among the former portion, the writing mania sets in strongly at sixteen, progresses beyond all calculation for five years, and then suddenly collapses. Occasionally the fever runs from three to ten years, with irregular recurrences after that period. Of course there are Micawberian exceptions with whom the habit becomes inveterate, and who linger out an epistolary existence to torture their acquaintances, confound their enemies, and keep their friends in a state of continued suspense and increasing irritability. Viewed abstractly, there are few who do not delight in receiving letters. It is a cheap sort of joy, and therefore the greater enhanced. But the receiving of these self-same

letters carries with it a moral obligation to answer them at once. Now trouble begins. The lady or gentleman not given to undue correspondence will find that the preconceived ideas (if such they have) of the simplicity of the task are greatly overdrawn when the time arrives for action. The answer will usually begin with a statement of the manifest fact that the writer now sits down and takes his pen in hand to write a few lines. This is followed up by a hygienic allusion combined with hope, a reference to the state of the weather past and present, and here the writer comes to a gap in the hedge of his ideas impossible to bridge over. Therefore there is a dead pause. If more can be written by the bewildered brain, why, so much the more to be thankful for ; if not, the writer closes in great haste for the ostensible purpose of catching the mail, which if not caught at once cannot be caught at all. Ah ! men and brethren, have we not reason to cry out against the advancing strides of education ? The more learning the more letters, and with increased letters, increased misery. Can we consent to such a sacrifice ? Hardy perpetrators of epistolary compositions at last will rule the day, and we, who are sufferers, must receive their literary blows in silence, unable to re-

spond. The pen is mitey-er than the sword in size, but in effects—ah me !

SUMMER WORK.

“ Up in the morning.”

EARL Y. RIZER.

The day of seed-time has arrived. We who love the bounteous gifts that nature's hand will shower upon us must prepare to shake that hand to secure that shower. Therefore, at early dawn, when the cool breeze of morning is lightly stirring the tree-tops, and the birds, having piped their matins, are making preparations for an early breakfast, we will shoulder our horticultural implements and hie us forth to our gardens. We will upturn the prolific soil with ready spade, arrange the beds with a housekeeper's art, and, the primary operations concluded, carefully line the ground and sow the seeds. We will have lettuce, spinach, peas, beans, parsnips, onions, potatoes, corn, cabbage, and all the other little et ceteras that a fertile mind can imagine, or a fertile soil produce. It is finished. The garden is complete and we will wait in patience the anticipated result. We will fold our hands in happy consciousness that our labor for the season is over and naught remains

but the coming of the harvest. That is—if we only could. But ah! in place of the tender plant-tops, noxious weeds will creep forth—weeds that in a few weeks, if unmolested, will rival Jack's bean-pole; knotty grasses will start up unbidden, sunflowers and holyhocks will usurp the place of vines, the bugs will tamper with your squashes, the parasites with your cabbages, the hens with your corn, and whatever else may be overlooked by these indefatigable workers the worms will kindly care for. So the man who goeth forth at early summer-tide with joy in his heart, will find, ere that summer is over, if he would enjoy the results of anticipation, that he must wage continual warfare with vegetable and animal enemies, and must expect a drouth where he would have rain; a wet season where a dry one would be preferred, and must submit with the meekest of resignation to all that can sorely try one's spirit, and if successful through all these adversities in conquering his temper, may set himself down as one highly favored, and as the possessor of a disposition not many degrees removed from angelic sweetness.

SUMMER SPORT.

Next to passive enjoyment of beautiful days and the quiet pleasure of the sweet twilight, when the lampwick of day is slowly turned down to the complete extinguishment of light, and the brooding darkness coming on becomes more and more visible, are the more active out-of-door amusements. Foremost in rank stands our great national "Juggernaut," base-ball, whose ponderous wheels have mutilated so many tender fingers, injured so many susceptible noses, and caused so many unfortunate eyes to be filled with tears of anguish. Here is devotion unalloyed. Through scenes of terrible excitement and unabated enthusiasm, of glorious victory and crushing defeat, through storm and sunshine the devotee follows the mazy changes of the spherical dance day after day, until the chilly blasts of winter put an end to the high-pressure state of existence, and he settles down to the calm realities of winter life, or fights again with ready tongue the battles that the summer lost and won. Not content with all this, he must have his state assemblings and his national conventions, until the institution has

been raised to might and glory, and wields a sceptre whose power is felt from freestone walls to cabin homes. But still more quiet and dearer yet to the feminine heart stands the no less national game of croquet. Here do the maidens all forlawn seek for that refreshing of intellect and soothing of spirit that the inside world can never give. From early morn to close of day the continuous clicking may be heard, accompanied with peals of laughter as of victory, and murmurings of disappointment as of defeat; showing how the mimic warfare, like the great battle of life, rages and progresses. And for those who, disdaining these popular pastimes, seek for other enjoyments wherewith to recruit their weary bodies, there yet remaineth the soothing labor of angling in grassy pools where most the fish do congregate, and where, under the shade of overhanging trees, whose leafy branches kiss the waters, we will drink in the calm serenity to the filling of our souls and the satisfaction of our inmost natures. Of course we will. Still further, we will go forth at early dawn with numerous warlike trappings and accoutrements, with the edict of death against all kind of feathered fowl flashing from our glittering eyes. Through the

hot sunshine we will drag our way over hill and plain, through wood and morass, and at night-fall homeward plod our weary way with praises or maledictions on our lips, as our success may warrant, or the condition of our game-bags make apparent.

When he had concluded, and the people were fairly awake, he announced that he would first exhibit the prizes, and would then proceed to take the sense of the meeting.

The first prize was a metal casket, for the entombing of the material which cheers but inebriates not, known as a tea canister. The second prize consisted of a metallic trumpet, commonly called a dinner horn. The third prize was an elegant circular pin-cushion.

Well, they voted and voted, but no essay had a majority, and the meeting finally became so much demoralized, that Tommy Jones put out the lights, which put out the people so much that they simultaneously adjourned, but not before somebody succeeded in becoming the unlawful possessors of the prizes.

Honestly yours,

R. S. TRUEMAN.

LETTER XVIII.

INCLINES TO THE POETICAL, BUT GRIMLY SUBSIDES
INTO THE PRACTICAL.

PINE GROVE, Nov. 9.

LITERARY.



MY daughter having had such good luck in writing poetry, the idea struck me that her talents in this line must be inherited, and I concluded to try my hand at it. I didn't find it so easy as I had supposed, but I worked it out, and here is the result of my week's labor:

ON EARLY RISING.

"The early worm gets caught."

—*Birds and Worms.*

Let those delight to get up
At early dawn of day;
Before the east is lit up
And darkness fades away—but I don't delight
in any such performances.

You might as well sit down to
Your dinner before it's done,
As to think of going to working
Before the rising sun—begins his work, just
exactly.

It's well enough for roosters,
And other birds of prey,
To get all through their crowing
While honest people lay—in bed asleep, happily unconscious of the rumpus.

It's better to be sleeping,
Forgetting toil and care,
Till breakfast is all ready,
Than to get up and swear—at the wet kindlings and no water in the tea-kettle.

There's one thing you can bet on,
I've always found it so ;
Your own experience 'll back me
In what I say, I know—and that is this

You can't be half so wicked
Where you don't get up till 11,
As you can when you quit snoozing
About the hour of 7—for don't you see, you haven't as much time to be wicked in, into four hours or so.

Oh yes, I'll take my chances,
And lay abed till noon,
For it's better to get up late
Than a couple of hours too soon—and I ought to know, for I've tried it these forty years.

I guess I do not care about writing any more poetry. It's a little out of my line, and, although I am convinced that I am the happy possessor of

no small amount of poetical talent, yet I appear to fail in the faculty of putting it in the right shape.

THE ELECTION.

The Democrats in the State seem to have put their thumb into the political pie and pulled out the plum of success, like the Johnny Horner we used to hear about in nursery days. But they failed to carry our town, although desperate measures were resorted to. Pine Grove is true to her flag, and that standard sheet will forever float where falls the foe but breathes before us. Our greatest fight was on justice of sessions. We had learned some days previous to the election that determined efforts would be made to defeat our candidate for that office, and we were prepared to meet with strenuous opposition. Being forewarned we were forearmed. We went quietly to work and made a bargain with T. Jones, our leading Democrat, to get us votes for justice, and we would reciprocate on Assembly. Jones bit, and we worked in that way all day long. At night we found that our man was ahead of his ticket. Thus did we demolish the

infamous attempt of the Democrats to defeat our candidate for legal honors. I fear that our Assemblyman is beaten, but we have no news from other parts of the district.

Believe me,

R. S. TRUEMAN.

LETTER XIX.

A DAY OF FEASTING—APPROPRIATE CEREMONIES.

PINE GROVE, NA., *Nov.* 29.

APOLOGETICAL.

IVES there a man with soul so dead, who ever to himself has said, it's nicer far to write a letter in place of doing something better than to enjoy these pleasant days, and amuse yourself in other ways. I am no such a man, and hence I have written no communications for a long time, but devoted myself solely and exclusively to the zealous observance of sunny weather and weak indigo-colored skies, and could not afford to make literary hay while the sun shone. But now as revengeful winter is about to clasp its fingers around the throat of dying summer, I descend once more into the sphere of literature and proceed to business.

THANKSGIVING.

You ought to have been here last Thursday. Pine Grove is famous for high old times among the boys, but she outdid herself on this occasion. We had church in the morning, and Parson Wilks preached a beautiful sermon, drawing water from the well of every sympathetic heart. It was noticed, however, that the crying ceased before the contribution box was passed; and the sensitive hearts were steeped in figurative vinegar, which communicated its acidity to the countenances of all who had been so deeply affected by the touching words of their pastor. The singing was tolerably good, so to speak. It was a piece by one of the old schoolmasters in music—no one with whom I am acquainted. There were fourteen solos, and more than a million duets and trios, by actual count, and it wound up with a great gush of wholesale melody, that set all our teeth chattering. It must have been delightful to any one who could appreciate that kind of thing; but for my own part, I like such hymns as “Old Hundred,” and “Coronation,” and “Dundee,” where the people take a hand in, and where the *vox populi* can be

heard in glorious strains, and pretty hard straining it takes, too, to sing them right. Church being over, the people returned to their homes. I could not fail to notice that everybody who attended church had been invited out to dinner, and were able to go to meeting in consequence, while all those people who gave dinner parties had to stay home and make ready for the feast. In the evening, the Society for the Amelioration of Human Vanities held their annual meeting at the tavern of Tommy Jones. At some future time I may write you more fully concerning the aims and objects of this beneficent association, but present time and space forbid. The society is composed of twelve of our leading citizens, and on every Thanksgiving night they have a supper. So they duly assembled, and the provisions disappeared in a masterly style. Then Parson Wilks voted himself unanimously into the chair, and Tommy Jones set up the cider. The parson briefly reviewed the transactions of the society for the past year, and complained bitterly of the want of funds to prosecute the good work. The amount received for the last six months would hardly pay for the evening's entertainment. He said that this day of Thanksgiving was a glorious, an immortal day. It was

a day that affected the interests of all the world, for were not Turkey, Greece, and China involved in its celebration? He said that grass was green and that skies were blue; that flowers bloomed in the spring and died in the fall; that rapid rivers ran swiftly, and the Erie canal scarcely moved; and when he had said these things he thought he had said enough (as indeed he had), and sat down. After this the regular toasts were propounded. 1. By George Low: "The age we most love—sausage." Received with applause, it being pertinent to the occasion, the staple referred to having formed a portion of the feast. II. By Deacon Amory: "Persons of tender feelings—pickpockets."—Responded to by Parson Wilks, who said he had been trying to pick the financial wool from his flock for benevolent purposes with limited success, and his feelings were sore upon this point. He thanked the honorable gentleman for thus alluding to him. III. By Jimmy Amory: "Why is the sigh I breathe for thee like a certain kind of dramatic representation? Because it's a pant-o'-mine." The propounder was hustled out of the room, and served him right. IV. By Captain Long: "Weather profits—trading your old umbrella for a new one." Responded to by Tommy Jones with his fist.

Tommy thought it was personal, on account of Parson Wilks's umbrella, which had been missing for some time, having been found concealed in Tommy's bar-room, a full and reliable account of which will be found in my letter about the earthquake. V. By R. L. Dany: "The dark ages—colored centenarians." Parson Wilks, mellowed with cider, arose for an explanation. He desired to ask the forgiveness of the friend of his bosom, Thomas Jones, in ever having considered him as having stolen his umbrella; and here, being entirely overcome, he fell upon Tommy's neck and boo-hooed like a great calf. VI. By Tommy Jones: "Parson Wilks—the noblest 'Run'un' of them all." Responded to by the Parson, in tears. VII. By Mrs. Jones' servant gal. This toast was brought in, well buttered, in covered dishes, and the society, moistening it in its tea, enjoyed it better than any of the other toasts yet offered. VIII. By Mrs. Jones herself: "Come, now, git right out of this. It's 12 o'clock, and you ought to be ashamed of yourselves—guzzling and stuffing yourselves like boy constructors." The meeting adjourned.

R. S. TRUEMAN.

LETTER XX.

THE PRESENT DAY—UPRISING OF THE PEOPLE.

PINE GROVE, *Dec.* 26.

ALL ABOUT A BIG CHRISTMAS TREE.

WE had a little Christmas of our own over here yesterday, and the celebration passed off in great style. There was service at 5 A.M., and I am instructed to state that the attendance was limited and the exercises chilly. The principal reason for holding it at such an early hour was to ascertain how many were true to their religious professions and duties. Besides, the church was to have a Christmas tree in the afternoon, and all the time that could be found was wanted to get things in readiness. Our congregation is scattered, many of them living five miles away, and it was thought best to have the tree on Sunday afternoon, that all might be present. As this was the first Christmas tree the Pine Grovers ever had, the ex-

citement about it was intense. General instructions had been issued the previous week as to its object and uses, several committees appointed, and the matter was pretty well understood. Parson Wilks, in making the announcement the Sunday previous, begged the people not to forget their faithful pastor. The Sunday-school scholars were privately informed by their several teachers that each was expected to make a present to his teacher under pain of expulsion. It looked a little arbitrary, but business is business. In expectation of a large attendance all the chairs that could be borrowed in the neighborhood were ranged in the aisles and galleries, and a limited number of tickets issued. I regret to say that more perjury and chicanery, and all manner of tongue wickedness, were committed by this people last week for the purpose of procuring the said tickets than was ever indulged in by any Christian community of equal size and intelligence, at any time or for any reason, in the United States. And what I say I mean. It was a noble field for colporteurs. The church was trimmed very handsomely. There were strings stretched across it with flags of different nations—but chiefly United States—suspended therefrom, and a unique col-

lection of looking-glasses and pictures hung around the sides. Perhaps there were almost too many insurance advertisements, but they helped to fill up. Several mottoes in shaky evergreen letters were plastered upon the walls. The tree was a fine one, and it was only by superhuman exertions that it was ever got into the church. The parties to whom was committed the task of procuring it literally fulfilled the instructions to procure an immense one, and about twenty feet of it had to be sawed off and then it reached to the roof and filled up a quarter of the church. By noon everything was in readiness, and the tree was quite presentable in consequence of the ingenuity displayed by hanging everything on the front side of it. The collection of presents was very good, and although there were perhaps too many apples in baskets and bags, and too much sweet cider in bottles and jugs, and a too numerous collection of vegetables and bed-quilts, and too few knick-knacks, still the display was creditable, and was regarded as a great success for a first attempt. At 1 o'clock the doors were opened, and the people, many of whom had been waiting outside since sunrise, were admitted. There was a grand rush for the seats, and the door-keepers had all they could

do to take the tickets and prevent the entrance of persons not having proper credentials. In fact, one of them, in the excitement of the moment no doubt, is reported as having gone around the corner of the church and sworn vehemently for five minutes, after which he returned in a cheerful state of mind, and resumed his position as ticket-taker. Now it did so happen that at least three persons desired admission to every one who had tickets, and at last, when the pent-up feelings of the multitude, excited to the highest pitch of indignation, could no longer be restrained, the crowd gave an immense surge, and away went the door-keepers and the ticket boxes, and the church was instantaneously filled. The balance of the outsiders were ranged about the door, and stood half a dozen deep at every window. The exercises began with a horridly excited song from the choir, and a prayer which was pertinent to the occasion. Then began the distribution of presents, which were taken from the tree by Parson Wilks, and handed to Jimmy Amory and Captain Long, who called off the names and delivered the property. It was reckoned that \$600 worth of apparatus changed hands. Parson Wilks received fourteen Bibles from different admirers,

ranging from immense quartos to the finest diamond print. I saw him around town this morning, trying to barter off a portion of them for something useful. Quite a painful accident occurred to the parson during the ceremonies. While engaged in handing down the presents from the upper part of the tree, the ladder slipped from under him and he fell among the branches, one of which caught him by his coat tails, and there he swung up and down like a boy on a teeter board. He cried for help, but owing to the agitated feelings of the people it was some time before he could be extricated from his embarrassing position. I received a handsome box, well secured with string, which attracted much attention from the persons near me, who insisted upon my opening it. As I had given no presents to any one, I did not expect to receive any, and the box came to me like a surprise party. On the outside was written my name and these words: "From your literary friends. Accept the enclosed 'Essay on Greece,' 'Blackstone,' and 'Works of Burns,' as a memento of the affection that lies within the bosoms of the givers." Ah, thought I, at last my genius has secured recognition. Knowing my taste for literature, some friendly hand has bestowed upon

me these beautiful books. I cut the string and opened the box, and—oh, ye heavens! Gracious Peter! Whew! I found a cake of tallow, with the letters S. A. written on it, and a note pinned to it which read: “’Tis grease, but living grease no more.” This was an essay on Greece with a vengeance. I found also a chunk of coal, and this my intuitive perception led me to believe was black-stone. Beneath it were two half-consumed almanacs which typified the works of burns. I have formed myself into a detective police association, and like Jo. Gargery’s wife, am on the rampage after the perpetrator of this horrible joke. I think I discover in it the handiwork of one Fritz, of Batavia, who challenged my daughter to write poetry, and because she refuses to pick up the literary gauntlet, he takes this inhuman method of executing ignoble revenge. Of course there was a great laugh at my expense, and although I can take a joke, I don’t know what to do with one after I have got it, so I thought it best to git, and got accordingly. In rushing through the crowd I accidentally trod upon Mrs. Stringer’s foot. She uttered a howl of anguish, belabored me with her parasol and abused me with her tongue, and made me pass as uncomfortable a two

minutes as I ever did before in my life. For the first time I realized the truth of the saying, "Hell hath no fury like a woman's corn." I learn that it was found impossible to take the tree out of the church, and it had to be cut into quarters to remove it. If Christmas trees are indeed jubilant this must have been a four-part song.

Sorrowfully yours,

R. S. TRUEMAN.

LETTER XXI.

GRAND OPENING FOR MORAL FASHIONS OF A NEW
LIFE, INCIDENTALLY SHOWING THAT SOMETIMES
THERE IS NO SLIP WHATEVER 'TWINX THE CUP
AND THE LIP.

PINE GROVE, *Jan.* 3, 1871.

T was very quiet here on Sunday. Appropriate reference to the day was made at the church by Parson Wilks in his sermon, and he embraced the occasion to get off a little joke, by saying that he felt like a stranger among the people, for he hadn't seen them before since last year. He also remarked that the day was the most pleasant one we had had this year. He suggested that the time was an appropriate one for making new resolutions if they were good ones, and for breaking old resolutions if they were bad ones. He suggested the propriety, on the part of the ladies of his congregation, of set-

ting forth no spirituous liquors for the entertainment of guests on the morrow. (Point not well taken. No one in Pine Grove makes New Year's calls, and not one in the place could offer anything but cider anyway. He probably had seen the conflagration that has been raging on this point of late in the newspapers, and didn't want to appear behind the times.) The regular official celebration of the day occurred on Monday, and consisted of a free lunch at Tommy Jones's, which it has been his custom to set forth for many years. As I am a firm believer in free lunches, and always make it a point to be present when anything of this kind is going on, I went over to Tommy's in the morning on a tour of inspection. True to his life-long custom, and with a due regard for his reputation, Tommy had set forth a master triumph of the gastronomic art. There was codfish picked up raw, little chips of dried beef, some oyster crackers, a bit of cheese, a few herrings and a pitcher of cider. It was understood that other beverages of a less temperate tendency were to be had for the asking. Altogether the preparations were of a festive nature, and I concluded to pass the morning amidst the good cheer. Tommy was glad to see me, knowing me to be

a light feeder, and asked me if I would take a bite. I bit. Presently in came Parson Wilks and Deacon Amory to warm themselves by the fire, for they were wet, and to drink a glass of cider, for they were dry. Parson Wilks picked up a piece of codfish, and the rear portion of a herring, when Tommy snatched them from his hand, saying, "No, no. It's too thin. You must eat your fish after you've drank, not before. I was drank out of house and home last New Year's day, in consequence of allowing my friends to get up an artificial thirst before they imbibed. The warning has not been lost. Drink first, and afterwards salt yourselves at discretion." Tommy was right. I know of two fellows who live here who always eat salt pork and raw codfish for a week before going to Rochester, and their reasons for so doing must be obvious. The parson and Deacon Amory tried a little cider to see if it was good, and finding it was, they took a little more to express their approval. Then they took a cracker, more cider, some cheese and beef, more cider, a herring and a little more cider, and having by this time become mellowed and friendly, they went to work in a genial way, sampling all the different kinds of liquors in the bar. The

usual result of mixed drinks followed. Parson Wilks found the bar-room in a state of considerable agitation, and making a track for the door he brought up in the fireplace. We hauled him out and set him upright. He presented a very discreditable appearance with his hat mashed down over his eyes, and his face blackened with the andirons like a piece of toast. Deacon Amory, holding fast to the counter, gazed upon the scene with an apathetic cast of countenance wonderful to behold. He was teetering gently to and fro, and nothing could induce him to sit down. He blandly intimated that if he once sat down it was all up with him, and said that if any one 'tempted t' haul down 'is flag, he would shoot him on 'er spot. As numerous people began to gather in the bar-room, we got the parson and deacon into the dining-room, where they fell to abusing one another roundly. I wonder now, and I wondered then, where such men, occupying such honorable positions in life, so worthy and so respected, could have learned those horrible words and terrible epithets they so freely uttered. As a fight between them seemed imminent, we had to tie them in their chairs. I agreed to watch them, and prevent their quarrelling, if I could, and I

thought what a blessing it would have been had they been tongue-tied as well as hand and foot tied. At last they fell sweetly asleep, and so remained until late in the afternoon. On awakening, they seemed to be all right again; but in a short time Parson Wilks had a relapse. Deacon Amory could walk very comfortably, and started for home, after extorting from Tommy Jones and myself a promise never to reveal what had happened. After dark we loaded the parson into a wheelbarrow and left him in front of his house, where he could readily be found by his family. Here endeth the lesson. I have been asked to keep this affair a secret, but my duty as a faithful Democrat and Chronicler of events must not be interfered with by promises made out of pity in the excitement of the moment. It is certainly to be regretted that men like Parson Wilks and Deacon Amory will permit themselves to become intoxicated, and it is hoped that the fearful lesson will not be lost upon the rising generation of Pine Grove. If the above narration can be of any utility to the accomplished writers, who, through the medium of the press, have endeavored to prevent the use of wine and liquors as refreshments on New Year's day, this letter

will not have been written in vain, and I will remain content to receive the abuse and obloquy that I am certain will be heaped upon me in consequence of this exposure.

Expectantly yours

R. S. TRUEMAN.

LETTER XXII.

AN AWFUL STATE OF AFFAIRS.



OUR Pine Grove correspondent at last has got himself into trouble. It will be seen by the following letters that the good people of that village take exceptions to his communications, and express a wish that they be discontinued, and, that in consequence of the publication of his correspondence, we are threatened with legal proceedings. If Mr. Trueman can make any explanation or offer any apology that will be accepted by his fellow-citizens, we shall be glad to have him do so and at once. His letters to this journal have been published by us in good faith, and, up to this time, we had no reason for doubting his integrity. We demand therefore, not only in justice to our many subscribers in that part of the county, but also as a duty he owes to ourselves, that he make a public retraction, or satisfy all concerned that he has not been guilty of falsehood.

PINE GROVE, *Jan.* 5, 1871.

ED. D. & C.:—Believing you to be possessed of that spirit which is called charity, and that you would not knowingly publish anything derogatory to a person's character, or, having done so, would gladly correct the error, I write these few lines to let a little light shine in upon you. You have a correspondent, one Trueman, who pretends to keep you posted about affairs here. I fear you do not know him. I know him to be a person in whom there is no truth. He is as full of lie as potash is; a base fabricator; a treacherous calumniator. He has used the press as a medium for circulating his prevarications, and has presented me before the public in ignoble positions, the very ridiculousness of which ought to stamp them as untruths. If you have any regard for the feelings of this community you will henceforth cease to credit his falsehoods, and charge him with his duplicity.

REV. L. WILKS, D.D.,
and Pastor of P. G. Church.

Pine grove, genuary 5.

dear sir: The suscriber whose name is sined

to this letter at the rekwest of parson wilks pasture of our church and of dekin Amory and his sun and also gorge low the lawyer desires me to say that I also have been lide about by trewman and if my name is on your books to have it krost out as i don't propose to help eny nuzepaper wot lise and nose it he has slandered me sevrall times in print but i didn't no how bad i felt untill the above named persons told me how orful it was i think this trewman has d—aged my bisnes and that you have acted as accompilis in accomplishin it by printing his letters i will except anything your cents of write may lede you to send me this will be the most centsible way of setlin in a money pint of view.

JOHN KLINKER.

PINE GROVE, *Jan.* 5, 1871.

Your petitioners would respectfully ask you to discontinue the publication of the letters from Pine Grove as furnished by R. S. Trueman. They are a vile slander upon this community. As what has already been done cannot now be un-

done, please give us no further cause for complaint.

T. A. Dany, wife and daughter,
Betsy McCracken,
Capt Long and two $\frac{1}{2}$ consins,
William Wren,
Matilda Hooker, and numerous
others who cannot write their name except with
an X, which spoils the effect of a petition.

PINE GROVE, Jan. 5, 1871.

Democrat and Chronicle Company:

I am instructed by my client, Deacon Robert Amory, to give you notice that he contemplates bringing an action against you for libel, in which he places the damages at an amount which, if he secures it, will render him comfortable for the remainder of his days. You have permitted the publication of letters from R. S. Trueman of this place, in which the character of my client has been unjustly assailed, and in which he has been held up to the scorn and derision of the world. To prevent this action you will publish a full and complete retraction of all that has been printed concerning Mr. Amory, and cease to publish all

letters emanating from the aforesaid Trueman. My client does not insist upon this course, but, on the contrary, prefers a libel suit, in which view, as a matter of professional duty, I think proper to encourage him.

GEORGE LOW,
Attorney and Counsellor at Law.

LETTER XXIII.

IN WHICH THE AUTHOR PUTS IN A DEFENCE, AND
UTTERLY DEMOLISHES THE BAD CHARACTER
WHICH HAD BEEN GIVEN HIM.

PINE GROVE, *Jan.* 9, 1871.

“The boy stood on the burning euchre deck,
And took the tricks when all but him had fled.”



WAS pained to see in the *Democrat and Chronicle* of the 6th inst. several letters and a petition from various persons in this place, with comments thereon by you. Now I have been to New York twice by the Erie road. On one occasion I ascended the stairs to the court house cupola in your city. I have walked the streets of Rochester at night when the almanac of the gas company proclaimed moonlight, but when the moon was only a faint and fleeting show for man's delusion given. I have read—with

what tribulation few can tell—"What I know about farming," by Horace Greeley. A person with such an experience as this generally ceases to be surprised at, or shocked by, anything that can possibly happen; but I must say that my feelings were visibly shattered by these letters from my old friends and neighbors. You were kind enough to say that up to this time you had every confidence in my veracity. It would have been more kind to have added that your confidence still remained unchanged. But, since I have been pitched into in this way, it seems a matter of necessity for me to re-establish myself in your good opinion, and show to the world that I am a truthful man, and have never, as yet, made light of dark subjects. I propose to walk into the affections of my traducers extensively. I may be obliged to use many long words, and many hard ones; for an innocent man, goaded by unjust reproaches and stung to the quick by infamous falsehoods, must use every weapon he can seize upon for his own defence. The hardest word I know of is iron-y, and I shall use it freely. I do not wonder that the people here petition you to discontinue my letters. I have yet to learn that any criminal, if he has a spark of manhood left, loves

to see his misdoings in print. Often have I seen the reporters of the papers in your city besieged by persons endeavoring to induce the ready writers to make no mention of some unfortunate affair in which the said persons were concerned. I can appreciate the feelings of my neighbors on this point. But truth is mighty and must prevail like summer flies. If Parson Wilks and Deacon Amory desire, or think that I will lie about them and say they did not get drunk on New Year's Day, they will find that anticipation is greater than realization. If John Klinker has such a horror of deception, will he kindly explain why he had a new set of buttons and a cotton velvet collar put on to his old overcoat this winter, and pretend it was a new coat? If George Low is so anxious for a suit for lie-bel he had better commence an action against himself. He would wear such a suit with ease and grace. Will Captain Long inform the community what he did with the two teaspoons he was seen to pocket at Parson Wilks's donation last summer? As for Dany and his wife and daughter, I will say that they are persons whom you can trust. Yes, you can trust them forever, but they never pay. Who is it that always comes with a quart jug to Tommy Jones's



"VINEGAR LIKE THE LAST I GOT" (Page 151)

every evening and calls for "vinegar like the last I got"? Ah, my old friend Hooker, a quart of vinegar a day is a great deal of sharpness for a small family, and a tavern is a queer place to get it at. If Betsy McCracken will explain why she pocketed the subscription money she received for a charitable purpose, instead of devoting it to the object for which it was raised, she will unveil a mystery that has long been hidden. But why charge home upon these people their faults and their weaknesses? My object in writing all these letters has been a noble one. My greatest desire has been to improve the moral tone of society at Pine Grove. By exposing the guilt of the wicked they will take care how they conduct themselves in future. People here are already better in consequence of the disclosures I have made. I cannot say that I am any more beloved in consequence of the part I have taken, but a free moral agent (myself), working out a grand aim in anticipation of grander results, must expect to meet with rebuffs, and I calculate I have got them. Whatever my faults and errors may have been, my motives are pure. I offer here a certificate of character from my firm friend and staunch supporter, Thomas Jones, Esq.:

To whom it may concern, or otherwise : This is to certify, that I have been acquainted with the deponent, R. S. Trueman, going on twenty years. I hope and believe him to be honest most always, and truthful generally. I can truly say that he has always paid his little bills with me promptly, which is more than can be said of others in this place. If he has lied about certain persons here, they ought to be lied about, but I do not think he honestly has—I mean I do not honestly think he has. I know he has spread it on a little thick sometimes, but not any too much. He has always spoken the truth through thick, and, it may be, thin. I heartily endorse everything about him, except his promissory notes. If he wants any more character, he can have it, or anything else he wants, by applying at the old place, where entertainment is provided for man and beast by

Yours truly,

THOMAS JONES.

I think this will do the business. With my character thus re-established I breathe easier,

and shall continue my literary career as formerly, unaffected by the venomous darts of envy and falsehood that the enemy may hurl against me.

Heroically yours,

R. S. TRUEMAN.

LETTER XXIV.

THE BANE OF CIVILIZATION.

PINE GROVE, *Jan 12, 1871.*

PARSON WILKS has been up and at 'em again. Not content with teaching the religious idea how to shoot in a profitable manner, he imagines that he is a writer, and is actually engaged most of the time in writing stories, and essays, and other trash. He has not become conceited enough yet to try his hand at writing letters for the newspapers, but there is no telling to what length his vanity may lead him. He has made me a sort of mutual friend, and whenever he is struck with an idea he commits it to paper, and then rushes over to my house, and commits it to me. He came in yesterday with a new essay about house cleaning, which I confess has something of originality in it, although I think too highly of myself to tell him so. Here it is:

The Feast of Household Purification is at hand. The ancient rites so dear to the heart of each and every tidy housekeeper are about to be celebrated. On every hand the preparations are going forward for a suitable observance of this annual pandemonium, and for the reception of the pestilence that stalketh abroad in the Spring. Whether the custom arose with our ancestors and came bowling along down the ball alley of time along with a thousand other productions of uselessness, cropped from the beery brains of the senile fogysm of the mediæval ages, or whether it didn't, is a matter for the investigation and speculation of those who may have the time and patience to devote to the solving of this mysterious problem. It is sufficient to know that the evil has an unquestioned existence ; that it is in the habit of blooming annually, but sometimes (such is human depravity) more frequently, and that it cannot even be classed under the head of that species of wrongs that may be committed in order that good may result.

It has been argued with that tenacity for which advocates of soap and water are famous, that it is a matter of necessity that a house should thoroughly be cleansed *at least* once a year (implying there-

by that the oftener it is done the better); that the attrition of the dust, and the presence of moths in the carpets, if allowed to remain and multiply, would soon blot out the beautiful figures and colors forever; that the walls would become so blackened as to offend the eye of even the most careless observer; that the enamel upon the furniture would disappear; that the stoves would present a piebald appearance disagreeable to behold; that fever would lurk in every crevice and corner. The same arguments are also urged on the score of economy.

Now, is this so? Is it cheaper to attack a carpet with dismantled broomsticks, breaking the meshes of the worsted, tearing the fingers with hidden tacks that cling to the edges with pertinacious energy, and so give your heart's best blood in defence of a principle, than to allow the carpet to remain quietly upon the floor and gradually pass down into a cherished and fading old age, and, by careful sweeping, exemplify the verdict of truthful household jurors that there is no cause for action? Is it a matter of necessity that the air should be filled with soapy odors and undefinable smells; that the household should be thrown into a state of siege for weeks at a time?

And would it not be cheaper, as regards the labor thrown away and the money expended in repairing, to allow things to remain undisturbed for five or ten years, and, making a bonfire of the house and all therein, purify them with fire, and then build a new house and refurnish it? There can be no denial. The plain statement of the facts admits of no refutation.

But there is another phase to the matter, which, in point of seriousness, is of far more consequence than the mere questions of necessity and economy. It is the wear and tear upon the moral sensibilities of human beings. The action upon the physical system is nothing, the exercise of muscular energy amounts to but little, and the sickness that is certain to follow the conclusion of general cleaning week, as a result of overwork, is of no account. These are things that cannot be avoided if the system of house-cleaning prevails, and the moral wear and tear of feelings are the natural concomitants.

It is fearful to contemplate the amount of swearing done by the male persuasion during this season, and blasphemy of the worst character, but for which men are in no way to blame, and for which they cannot be held accountable, being

provoked thereto by conduct that admits of no other reply.

A man leaves his house in the morning to attend to his business. All is neatness and order. Everything looks well enough. There are no mud-puddles upon the floor, no blotches upon the paper. The plastering seems to be intact and the arms and legs of the chairs to be in their proper places. Notwithstanding all this, a parting shot is fired at him to the effect that house-cleaning is going to begin that day. He hesitates about returning at noon, for bitter experience has taught him that he need not expect anything to eat but that worst of fallacies, a picked up dinner. He does go home, however, not to rejoice in a pleasant, cheery household, but to swear at the chaos that prevails. The hall is blockaded like a furniture auction room ; the air is choked with dust, and the floors reek with dampness. By dint of agility he forces a passage—as difficult a one as could be selected from a Hebrew Bible—to the kitchen, where a mild refection, in the shape of a crust of bread and a cup of tea that blushes from long boiling, awaits his royal highness. Having partially quelled the rebellion that naturally arises in his bosom, he

regales himself with this travesty on eating, and sneaks away with a sense of injured dignity, of downright imposition, and it may be with a breaking heart. At night the dismal farce is re-enacted and he camps out upon the battle-field with little of that halo of glory overspreading him that usually pertains to the life of a martyr.

But why pursue the harrowing theme? Is it any wonder that men at this time practise the most terrible deception? Can they be blamed if asked to tinker with an obstinate stove or an unruly stovepipe, for asserting that they "must go right back to the store, business is so driving," when they know and feel that if they meddle with these things they will be guilty of uttering words that in a calmer hour are strangers to their lips, and that whole years of penitence cannot atone for?

Necessity and Economy—Falsehood and Blasphemy. These are the so-called causes, and these the direct effects of house-cleaning. Can any system that provokes these evils be a good one, or be founded in right and equity? Better, far better, that the walls be coated with grease, the moths hold high carnival in the carpets, the ceiling be black with the smoke of ages, the furniture be-

come begrimed with dirt and stoves rust out through sheer neglect, than that Man, created in the image of his Maker, be forced to commit unwilling sin. When will women learn wisdom?

I asked him if he wasn't tired writing so much and then reading it, and he said he wasn't. But I know better. I know myself how it is.

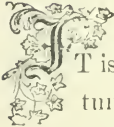
Yours in love,

R. S. TRUEMAN.

LETTER XXV.

A VERACIOUS HISTORY OF A SEARCH AFTER THE
UNFATHOMABLE.

PINE GROVE, *Jan.* 13, 1871.

T is not often that our people have an opportunity to see the great artists of the country, and we are obliged to content ourselves with such accounts of lecturers, singers, minstrels and such like, as the *Democrat and Chronicle* sees fit to give us. It is some distance to Rochester, and the road none of the best; and besides, it costs a pile of money for horse-keeping, supper and tickets. Sometimes, however, we make up our minds to go when something unusual is to take place, but our visits of pleasure are few and far between. For a long time we had been talking about going to hear Miss Kellogg whenever she came to Rochester. Pat Sweeney, who drove on the canal last summer and with whom

you may be acquainted, heard her in New York, and his account of her singing made all eager to listen to her melodeon voice. So on Monday afternoon Mr. Dana, Mrs. Stringer, Parson Wilks, Matilda Hooker, my daughter and myself might have been seen—and indeed, were seen—by all the people of Pine Grove, climbing into a lumber wagon *en route* for Rochester. Our preparations for this august (January) occasion were simple and few. We took up a collection among our friends, Tommy Jones giving \$1 to help the cause along, and others contributing small amounts until the finance committee, myself, declared the sum to be sufficient. As Mrs. Dana was unable to attend, on account of boils (it being washing day), Mrs. Stringer borrowed her false teeth, which were gold plate, not having any of own, false or otherwise. Parson Wilks secured Deacon Amory's tall hat, Matilda Hooker borrowed Mrs. Wren's gold spectacles, so as to look literary like, and, it being chilly, I borrowed Klinker's overcoat. I wonder whether he would lend it to me now, since my last letter was printed. We got into Rochester at five o'clock, left our equipage at the stable, and feeling peckish started out for something to eat. We

went over to Mr. Kremlin's saloon, near where they swing on a bridge in warm weather. A gentleman with a white apron shut us up in a little room where there was a table and chairs and not much else, and no room for it if there had been. As we had made up our minds to have a good time, regardless of expense, we had oysters all around. The waiter brought us a ticket with \$2.10 printed on it, which created a little consternation among us, it being more than we had anticipated. However, as there seemed to be no way to avoid it, I paid the bill. Then we all went over to Mr. Powers' block, and passed away half an hour very comfortably riding up and down in the elevator, until Mrs. Stringer commenced to get sea-sick. Afterwards we looked about the streets until the rest of us became see-sick, and then went over to the hall, where we had to sit on the steps nearly an hour waiting for the ticket office to open. When the time came I purchased tickets for the party, and tried to get a discount off for so large a number, but the ticket-seller said his bank wasn't discounting then, so I paid the \$6, and it took nearly all the money I had. The seller objected to taking so much postal currency and four rolls of pennies, but finally did so,

muttering something which I am glad I didn't hear, as I expect it wasn't perfectly proper. We found a nice seat on the side of the hall, where we could overlook all the people. My daughter wanted to know what all the labels meant on the seat, and I explained that they were put there for the benefit of the people who lived out of town. I shuddered when I said it, but the seat was a good one, and I determined to trust to luck to keep it. Presently in came a lady and gentleman, looking very smiling, and approached our seat. The gentleman examined some little cards in his hands, and asked Parson Wilks, who sat nearest, if he had taken that seat. The parson, looking as innocent as Mary's little lamb with fleece as white as snow, said we took them when we came in. The gentleman said there must be some mistake about it, and I began to think so too when all of my party turned toward me with beseeching eyes, and when I beheld the eyes of two hundred other people gazing at us. While I hesitated, the person who told people where to sit that held tickets in the seat lottery, came up and explained the situation, and we had to give up our places. I appealed to him for assistance, for the hall by this time was well filled, but all he could do was to

find us some stools, so we occupied them, and there we sat in a row like so many stool pigeons. The rest of the party didn't seem to like it a bit, and they talked hard at me. Parson Wilks said my conduct was unchristian like; Mr. Dana said I was a swindler; Mrs. Stringer said she could broomstick me with great satisfaction; Matilda Hooker offered to tear my eyes out; my daughter said she'd fix me for coming that game on them. I felt a little sore about it, and only consoled myself with the thought that great men receive abuse as well as honors. At last we got quieted down, except Parson Wilks, who had a squeaky stool, and who made it go whenever I tried to say anything funny, so the rest couldn't hear, which was a little discouraging. There was a three-legged piano on the stage with "Weber" on it, which I suppose to be the name of the owner of it, so in case it should get lost the party finding it could tell where it belonged. It was pitiful to observe that in such a fine-looking audience so many were near-sighted and were obliged to use double-barrelled eye-glasses to see with. Then there were such nice people in good clothes, with flashing jewels, and eyes that flashed quite as brilliant. It was a little difficult for me to

understand the words of the first piece, being but little acquainted with foreign languages and not any too much with my own. But the melody, having no language, I could appreciate. But it wasn't Randolfi, nor Macdonald, nor Wehli, we come to hear; Kellogg was the man for our money, and at last she appeared. Wasn't she nice, though? And she sung so beautifully and so easily. No wonder all the people clapped their hands until they ached, and burst their leather gloves, and said it was bully. And it was. I can't describe it, we were all so carried away. Then in the second part, where she sat down to the piano and played and sung that little song, "Look out or you'll get April Fooled," or some such name, how sweet she smiled, especially when they slung those bunches of posies on the stage! I do not wonder (if the story be true) that, when Nilsson heard Kellogg sing this little song, that she got up and hit her umbrella on the seat so hard that she broke it. I would, too, if I had one, but through delight, not anger. Then when Wehli put one hand in his pocket, and played "Home, Sweet Home," twisted up with the other, that was wonderful. I don't think I could have done it better with both hands. On the whole, the con-

cert received the hearty approval of the Pine Grove delegation. There was one thing I did not like, and that was so many people going out during the show. If they didn't like it, they should have remained out of regard for the performers' feelings. I also learned that the most of the parties who disturbed the meeting were going off on a regular train. More likely they had come to town on one, and it would be better, if they must train, to stay home and do it. At last the concert was over, and the people made a rush for the door. During the pressure some one stepped on to Parson Wilks's hat, which he had borrowed from Deacon Amory, and when the parson picked it up it looked like an accordion. The smasher said, "I beg your pardon," and passed on, unmindful of the ruin he had wrought. We fixed it as well as we were able and passed out into the passage, where Parson Wilks had an interview with a policeman, to see if he could engage Miss Kellogg to give a concert at Pine Grove. I didn't hear exactly what was said, but I believe the concert isn't coming off at present. What the policeman did, was to laugh the parson in his face, and afterward behind his back, and subsequently all around him, which was impolite to say the least.

Our calculation had been to have a little supper before starting for home, but the treasurer reporting that he had been compelled to suspend payment, we went up to the stable, where I had to become personally responsible for the keeping of the horses. It wasn't quite as pleasant going home as it had been coming, inasmuch as the rest of them took the opportunity to heap coals of fire on my head, and hot ones too. You see none of them would have gone with me, on account of our little newspaper quarrel, but they couldn't get along without me. Besides this, I gave them to understand that I knew the ropes, which I fear I didn't prove to their entire satisfaction. However, they were all glad they went, for it was pleasant, and not expensive to us, as the whole business was done on borrowed capital. We arrived home safely with only two mishaps: Matilda Hooker lost both glasses out of the spectacles she had borrowed, and Mrs. Stringer, in consequence of the wagon jolting, lost the false teeth that Mrs. Dana had let her take, they being ejected from her mouth with much violence, and we were unable to find them in the dark. I append herewith a multiplication table, which illustrates how I fooled myself. I calculated to make a remunerative

commission out of the expedition, but as figures will not tell a lie, it will be seen wherein I failed :

Received from contributions.....\$8 22

What I expected it would cost :

Six suppers.....	\$1 50	
Six tickets.....	1 50	
Six lunches.....	60	
Horsekeeping.....	50	4 10
Leaving my commission.....		\$4 12

How it came out :

Six suppers.....	\$2 10	
Six tickets.....	6 00	
Gum drops.....	06	
Horsekeeping.....	50	8 66
Leaving me out of pocket.....		44

The next time some one else can go on the Finance Committee.

Sadly yours,

R. S. TRUEMAN.

LETTER XXVI.

SOMEWHAT GASTRONOMICAL—RELATES HOW DEACON AMORY LOST ALL TASTE FOR THE FINE ARTS AND EVERYTHING ELSE.

PINE GROVE, *Jan.* 19, 1871.

 YOU probably know John Wiley, who keeps the grocery store on the corner, here in the village. Almost everybody does, and if any one does not, I want them to understand that he is one of the meekest men extant. Many a time have I seen him shed copious tears of grief because some one spoke unkindly to him, and I don't believe he ever said "No" in his life. Frequently have I observed that gentle man actually get off from the sidewalk, and go around, when a cow happened to be in the way, rather than injure the feelings of the animal by driving her off. I have known him to get up at two o'clock on a winter morning and go down to his store to see

if his eat was warm and comfortable. I state these characteristics of the man, because I desire to show how that when a man of this kind lets his angry passions rise, he makes terrible work of it. Now, Wiley has suffered extensively from the raids of small pilferers, who enter his place of business during the day time and help themselves to an apple, or a few crackers, or a handful of raisins, or something of that sort. He has informed me that enough has been stolen from him every year in that way to pay the wages of a small-sized clerk. He thinks it extremely hard to have his property carried off bodily in this manner, and yet be unable to remonstrate for fear of offending some one. I have talked the matter over with him frequently, and urged him to make an example of somebody, and at last he agreed to do so. Now it so happened that Deacon Amory was one of his best gratuitous customers. He never came into the store without carrying away from three to ten cents' worth of portable property within his person. If he wanted a pound of sugar he always managed to eat a double handful besides out of the barrel, and never was there a chest of tea opened but what he took home a good-sized drawing of it to see whether his folks liked it, which

they never did. As for apples, raisins, figs, nuts, and candies, he always managed to eat considerable, and always got value received without giving value paid. Deacon Amory, then, was the man selected for the experiment. Upon his devoted head was to fall the wrath of the long suffering Wiley. For the accumulated sins of all the pickers and nibblers in the neighborhood he was to answer. It was my suggestion that brought it about, and I rather think he will let me alone after this, both in and out of the newspapers. The Deacon always came into Wiley's store every Monday morning after soap, for domestic purposes, and we agreed to seize the first opportunity to carry out our plan. As Wiley had sufficient strength of character, as well as muscle, to accomplish the task unaided, I concluded to act merely as a spectator. On Monday morning then, about nine o'clock, the deacon came into the store. There were quite a number of people sitting around the store, quite innocent like, who dropped in to see the fun. "Nice morning," said the deacon, going behind the counter and helping himself to a chew of tobacco, and afterwards rolling up a good-sized wad of it, which he transferred to his pocket. Mr. Wiley said it was indeed a nice morning

"I guess the rain is about over," continued the deacon, helping himself to a quarter of a pound of cheese, a dozen crackers, and as much butter as he could crowd upon the largest blade of his jack-knife. After drawing a glass of cider he deliberately peeled the largest herring in the box, and commenced the assault on the provisions. Wiley said nothing, but his muscular arms heaved visibly. The deacon kept on eating and talking as natural as life, and finally wiped his mouth in a self-satisfied way, that would have wrung a smile from a marble statue. Mr. Wiley had kept still so long that I began to think his spirit had failed him, and that he was going to let the opportunity pass. But the hour was not yet. It was only the calm preceding the storm. The deacon walked along inside the counter, tasting one thing and another in a desultory way, until he stood opposite where Wiley was standing. Watching his opportunity, the aroused Wiley seized the unsuspecting deacon by the coat collar and the loosest portion of his pants, and dragging him violently over the counter, sat him down with emphasis in an arm-chair directly before the fire, and before the deacon could say a word he had him tied hand and foot. "What does this mean?" gasped the

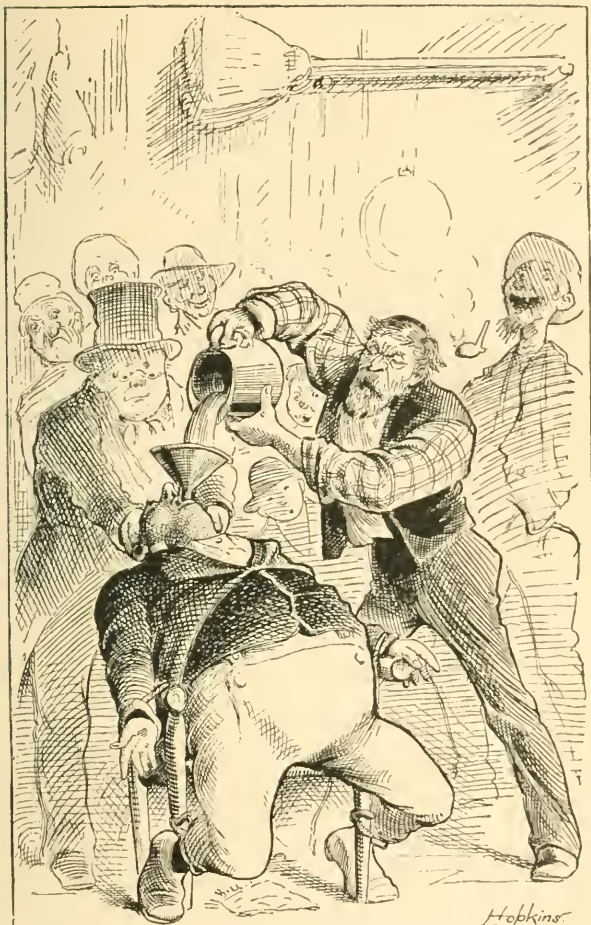
astonished man. "Why, nothing," said Wiley, "I'm only exercising. I have got a little bill here against you I would like to have paid." "I don't owe you nothing," said the purple-hued victim. "I always pay cash." "No, you don't. You pay part cash and take the rest in trade, only I have to furnish the trade. But here is the bill: I'll hold it up so you can read it." The rainbow-tinted countenance of the deacon resolved itself into a perplexed stare as he read:

"Deacon Amory to John Wiley, Dr.,—To eating up little things in my store that cost me money, for a period of fifteen years, at fifty cents a week, \$390."

"Now," said the indignant Wiley, "I'll just trouble you to settle it. There hasn't been a day but what you have robbed me in this way, and I had just as soon you had gone to my money drawer and helped yourself, as to my groceries. I had rather pay you \$25 a year to keep away from here, and I would make money by it." By this time nearly all the surplus population of the place had arrived upon the scene, headed by Tommy Jones, who encouraged Wiley to continue, by throwing in an occasional, "Go in, Johnny!" "Give it to him!" and other appropriate remarks

adapted to the occasion. "It's a contemptible swindle!" roared the deacon, "and I'll never pay it." "Throw off ten per cent. for cash," said Wiley. "I'll never pay it. Isn't there any one here to help me?" There wasn't anybody. "Well," said Wiley, growing more indignant, "if you will not pay it, I may as well make the bill \$400; it only lacks \$10 of it. Some one hold his head for me." Twenty persons started to assist, and got into a quarrel as to who should have the honor; but Tommy Jones, ever valiant, ever ready, took charge of the man's head, by reason of being the head man in the place. The irascible Wiley proceeded to insert a two-inch ring into the deacon's mouth, so that he was unable to close it. And now began the most wonderful performance I ever witnessed. When I think of it now, I can scarcely realize that it ever happened. The performance began by Mr. Wiley pouring a small bottle of castor-oil down the victim's throat. Next he put in a handful of raisins, then half a pound of soda, and afterwards a hunk of alum. He then gave him a scoopful of shot to make him heavy, and followed it up with a paper of baking powder to make him light. He gave him

a mixed assortment of tea, ground coffee, saleratus, and a roll of counterfeit shimplasters. He dosed him with sulphur, cream tartar and red pepper. He fed him copperas, saltpetre and allspice, and whenever the deacon refused to swallow he assisted him with a gentle choke, so that he was content to obey orders without further resistance. When Wiley had gone through with samples of the solid material in the grocery, he put a large funnel into the deacon's mouth, and wedged it in with spring clothes-pins. Into that funnel he poured a quart of cider, some molasses, some kerosene oil, a little tar, a pint of vinegar, some melted butter, and the land knows what all, until the deacon, swelling up like a balloon in process of inflation, appeared to be on the point of bursting and making a muss on the floor. At last the wrath of the maniacal Wiley was appeased. He made an additional entry of ten dollars on the bill for provisions consumed, receipted it in full, tucked it into the deacon's vest pocket, removed the iron ring, untied his hands and feet, and let him go. The deacon did not stand upon the ceremony of going, but went at once, and with a countenance like a full-blown peony, and looking for all the world like a hogshead gifted with pedestrianism,



DERCON JAMORY GETS ENOUGH FOR ONCE.
For further particulars See page 176

he rolled out of the store. It was rather harsh treatment, but the effect intended has been produced. I will guarantee that the nibbling mania in John Wiley's store has been effectually stopped, and his next income return will show it. I need not point out the moral of this rustic tale. It is obvious. The plan of stopping such thieving outrages has not been patented, but is open for trial by all dealers in groceries, provisions and salt mackerel. No one need doubt its efficiency.

Triumphantly yours,

R. S. TRUEMAN.

LETTER XXVII.

WHEREIN IS REVEALED AN INTELLECTUAL SKELETON
IN THE HOUSE OCCUPIED BY THE WORTHY AUTHOR.

PINE GROVE, *Jan.* 23, 1871.



It is hard to place before the eye of a scandal-loving public a picture of rural distress.

It is painful to open the door of domestic unhappiness and invite the great world to look in; but a strict regard for justice, and a desire to ascertain the whereabouts of a certain individual (name and residence at present unknown) prompts me to smother reticence, and unfold a poem which shall point a moral and adorn a tale—sad as it may be. The circumstances attending the publication of this poetry are few and brief. For some time my daughter has been extremely melancholy. She has moped about the house in a heart-broken sort of way extremely

touching to a fond parent. She has taken no interest in domestic affairs, and has even neglected the reading of the *New York Ledger* and the *Waverley Magazine*, of which she is as fond as George Washington was of his hatchet. She has refused her fried pork and potatoes, and has not taken kindly to gruel or hash. I watched her closely in all these things, and at last I made up my mind that she had been at it again and committed herself to poetry. Accordingly, to find the evidences of her guilt, I began a search through the premises yesterday, while the family were at church, and in her portfolio I found the following lines. Imagine my terrified feelings! Of course, as a believer in true genius and in the poetical works of art, I am proud of such a daughter, but I should greatly prefer that she let her fancy fly off at some other tangent, than to devote her abilities and stationery to a subject like this. I cannot find out who she was writing to. She declines to tell, although I pounded her until she was black and blue and I was red. I will give my entire perquisites as justice of the peace, for three months, to find out who she means in this poem.

A SWEET SONG OF LOVE.

The rose is red,
The violet blue,
Sugar is sweet
And so be you.

[Slate Pencil Sketches.

I am going to tell you something
That I reckon'll make you jump,
And I hope and pray it will cause your
Dear heart like my own to thump.

I feel kind o' skittish about telling,
For I don't know what you may do ;
But I'll break the ice at a venture
And take the chances on you.

I love you, and that's what the matter,
The words to my lips will come ;
You're sweeter than candy or syrup,
And I love you better than gum.

My pine-apple blossom, my essence,
My balm of a thousand flowers,
My extract of lemon—I love thee.
Thou sweetest of sweet-scented bowers.

Were I only a big lump of sugar,
And thou a cup of green tea,
How gladly I'd give my frail life up
To melt and dissolve for thee.

If all the great world was mine, dear,
And the planets, and stars that shoot,
I'd trade them all off for thy love, dear,
And wouldn't ask nothing to boot.

For my love it is stronger than onions,
And my heart, like a railroad train,
Goes faster and faster—I think, love,
That it never will stop again,

Unless, indeed, you will kindly
Hang out a red flag, through fear
Of accidents happening—why then, I
Will stop at your station, my dear.

I cannot help loving you, sweetest,
And I wouldn't, my pet, if I could ;
For I've tried to quit it, my deary,
But I couldn't, my own, if I would.

So here you have the whole story,
And I guess it's plain to be seen
That I certainly mean what I say, dear,
As I certainly say what I mean.

If the person for whom these lines are intended will call at my residence in Pine Grove, three doors from Parson Wilks's meeting-house, he will receive a broken head gratuitously, and no ques-

tions asked or answered. A word to the unwise
it is believed, will be sufficient.

Wrathily yours,

R. S. TRUEMAN.

LETTER XXVIII.

MEETING OF THE ASSOCIATION FOR THE CULTIVATION OF ÆSTHETICS.

PINE GROVE, *Feb.* 9, 1871.



BEFORE I get head and heels over into this letter I desire to state that what follows can be relied upon to the fullest extent. It is unnecessary to mention this to any one who knows me, and I only refer to it from the fact that I am credibly informed that an impression prevails among sundry persons that my letters are all gammon, and I wish to do away with any such impression. If any one desires to investigate the subject let him come over to Pine Grove, any sunshiny day, and I will engage to prove to the entire satisfaction of the searcher after truth that these letters are a reality. Enough is sufficient.

You know, of course, what a bright, active and intelligent community this is. We are few in numbers, to be sure, 200 being the extreme limit

of population in the place ; but there is enough gumption and go aheadativeness here to supply half a dozen villages of the same size. It would surprise you to hear how many different societies and organizations we have. I wrote you some time ago an account of the annual meeting of "The Society for the Amelioration of Human Vanities," and promised to give you a full and complete explanation of its workings, which promise is as good now as it was then, and will be kept when the time comes—if it ever does. To begin with, we have a Sewing Society, where they not only sew tears, but also sow tares, and, in due course of time, reap a large crop of scandal. There is a Missionary Society for the distribution of bogus pennies and counterfeit shinplasters among the benighted heathen abroad, and not one cent for tribute among the barbarous ones at home. There is a Dispensary Society for furnishing medicine (chiefly boneset and sage tea) to the sick, and provender (mostly odd crusts of bread, doubtful pieces of salt pork, and the triangular upper end of hams) to the starving. I may here remark that the demands for assistance from such unfortunates are very light, knowing the diet that awaits them. There is also an "Organization

for the suppression of the sale and use of intoxicating drinks," whether as beverages or medicinally. There are at least half a dozen other societies, and all in working order, with officers and committees, pass-words, grips, and regular times and places of meeting, with all the necessary paraphernalia. This winter we organized a new one, which is called "An Association for the Cultivation of Æsthetics." Its membership exceeds that of all the others, and we have sessions fortnightly, generally meeting in the church. Nearly everybody belongs to it, in consequence, I am led to believe, of there being no initiation fee, nor any expense attending it, which is always an element of popularity in everything. Even Tommy Jones is a member, although he is not as heavy on literature as he is a tobacco-chewer. We held a re-union on Wednesday night, and I thought that maybe you would like a brief account of the proceedings. The meeting was called to as much order as the crowded state of the church would permit, by Parson Wilks, who pounded on the pulpit, and gesticulated with much vehemence, as though he was preaching a doctrinal sermon.—The first thing read was an essay on the "Rise and Decline of Summer Squashes," which was

twice repeated, to accommodate a number who came in late. Then there was a dialogue between Priscilla Locker and Matilda Hooker, the school-ma'am. It was something about the transmigration of souls, and it didn't take well at all with the audience. Jimmy Amory then delivered an oration, beginning "There was a man, a Roman soldier." He spoke it pretty well, though he catches his breath audibly, and rolls his "R's" like a lumber wagon. Evaline Dore read an essay entitled "The Utility of Corsets in filling up the Waist Places of Womanity." This production drew tears from the softer sex, both male and female. The next thing was a reprimand from Parson Wilks, accompanied by a practical illustration of the saying, "He who hath ears to be pulled, let them be pulled." He took out three boys in this way, who were inclined to be mussy. Mrs. Dany then read a humorous essay called "Melancholy." The audience could scarcely retain its sides from bursting with laughter. Afterwards, my daughter recited an original poem entitled "The Heart longings and Soul-yearnings of the Desirous." (Maybe you would like to see it in print, but you never will.) She was called out twice—once by the audience, and once by a

'young fellow who wanted to see her in the porch on particular business. She responded to both calls. George Low then read a dissertation on "The Flea, and the best Methods of Extermination." The people manifested great interest during the reading of this production. The next thing was a portion of history selected and read by Jane Dany, entitled "The Emancipation Proclamation; or, the attempt to make black, white." Parson Wilks then arose and delivered a short discourse as follows: "If John Smithers and Parmina Scroon do not quit whispering, and holding hands on the back seat, I shall be compelled to mention names and tell what they are doing." There was a great uproar among the audience at this sally, and Smithers arose at the call of the house for explanation. I respectfully decline to mention what he said, but he went on fearfully, called our beloved minister anything but pet names, and went so far as to intimate that the parson hadn't strength enough to lick even a postage-stamp. Parson Wilks jawed back, and the meeting worked itself up into such a fermentation of rage, that it looked for a moment as though it was all going to pieces. But some one stuffed Smithers's comforter (his woollen

one, not Parmina) into his mouth, and somebody else threw an overcoat over Parson Wilks's head and extinguished his fire of words in a twinkling. Tommy Jones made herculean attempts to restore order, in which he succeeded, after knocking down a dozen or so of the most refractory ones, and dragging them out by their boots. Quiet at last prevailed, and the performance went on. William Long read a well-written essay on "The Use and Abuse of Firecrackers, and their Relation to the Human Family." It was greatly admired, and replete with deep reflection, searching investigation, and solid information. Pat Sweeney then recited a sweet little poem, beginning, "The lark is up to meet the sun, The son is out upon a lark." Here one of the seats broke down, and the fall in dry-goods and broadcloth was tremendous. This occasioned considerable excitement and merriment, and it took at least ten minutes to get things around into shape. Joshua Wilkins read a short essay, entitled "Metaphysics and other Physics—which do you like best?" Afterwards William Jones delivered an oration. His subject was "Egotism and Yongotism." The exercises closed with a feeling address from Parson Wilks, who thanked the

audience for their kind attention and remarkable quietude, and hoped to meet them all again on a similar occasion at some future time. The committee, whose duty it was to see who goes home with who, then abruptly retired to the front steps to take observations, and the remaining few slowly followed. The fire was then put out together with a drunken man, who wanted to fight; the lamps were extinguished, and the church door securely locked. The entire performance may be regarded as a success.

Yours elatedly,

R. S. TRUEMAN.

LETTER XXIX.

AN UNEXPECTED DEPARTURE—WHAT MAY BE EXPECTED OF PEOPLE WHO MISBEHAVE.

PINE GROVE, *Feb.* 12, 1871.

T becomes my painful duty, as your active, energetic and truthful correspondent, to transmit to you an account of a fearful catastrophe that occurred here on Saturday night. The circumstances attending it are so very peculiar, and the tragedy so extremely singular, that I fear I shall be unable to do that justice to the subject which its importance demands. However, I will endeavor to narrate the facts as briefly and simply as I can, and leave you to make sight drafts on your imagination for the balance of the account. About ten o'clock on the evening of Saturday last, after nearly all the people had retired for the night, a terrific explosion occurred in the west part of the village, which startled the inhabitants from their peaceful

slumbers, and shook the ground and the houses perceptibly. Fearing that another earthquake had taken place, the people rushed from their dwellings, clad in the snowy and otherwise robes of night, and a great commotion and locomotion ensued. Women fainted, children screamed ; and men ran hither and thither in a state of extreme bewilderment and intense excitement. No further explosion taking place, a number of us quieted the fears of the people and induced them to return to their houses. This accomplished, Parson Wilks, Deacon Amory, Tommy Jones and myself procured lanterns, and went up the road from whence the noise had proceeded. We found the place just at the outskirts of the village. The explosion had happened at Mrs. Stringer's. The front fence had been thrown down and was badly broken, the gate was lying on the other side of the road, and the front of the house was nearly demolished. Windows were broken, the chimney overthrown, doors thrown from their hinges, and the clapboards wrenched off. The ground in the vicinity was blackened, as though a great gunpowder explosion had taken place. For some distance up and down the road, branches of trees, fence pickets, rails, shingles, and broken bricks

were scattered about, presenting a frightful and ghastly appearance. On entering the house we found Mrs. Stringer weeping and wringing her hands in violent grief, and it was some time before she became calm enough to give any sort of explanation. She said that her daughter, and a young man named James Lariper, who worked in a blacksmith shop, went out together about seven o'clock to spend the evening at the house of a friend, and she sat up to await their return. Shortly before ten she heard them coming up the road, and presently the front gate was opened and shut. About a minute thereafter the explosion occurred, which stretched her senseless upon her own hearthstone. As soon as she recovered, she rushed out, but was unable to find the slightest traces of either her daughter or her young man. She thought the whole thing was a conspiracy on the part of another young man in the village, who had heretofore been keeping company with her daughter, but whom the latter had jilted and taken up with Lariper. She believed that the jilted young man (whose name I prefer not to mention), fired with devilish jealousy and ungovernable rage, had undermined the front gate with powder, and, watching his opportunity, had set a slow match

to it; and the explosion had been so well timed that the fearful result had followed just as it had been planned. The explanation was regarded by us as somewhat unreasonable, knowing the young man to be an inoffensive sort of fellow, and incapable of conceiving and carrying out such a murderous plot, and we determined to give the matter a fuller examination. Pat Sweeney here came in and said that he was passing by the house just before the explosion occurred. He noticed Lariper and Jane Stringer standing by the gate, and being curiously disposed, he watched them. He saw Lariper put his arm around Jane and kiss her, and at that instant he saw a flash close by them, and heard a report like thunder. He was knocked down by the explosion, and, as soon as he could get up, ran for home with all speed. We then went over to Mr. Wilkins's house, where Lariper boarded, and rousing up the folks we went upstairs to his room. His clothes were strewn about the place in confusion, just as natural as any one's is who dresses in a hurry to go out and see his girl.-- On the table we found a bottle, or case, labelled nitro-glycerine. Mrs. Wilkins told us that Lariper had been troubled with sore lips, and some one had told him that glycerine was good for

what ailed him. That on the previous day he went to Rochester and procured some, as he supposed, and had just put some on his lips that evening for the first time. The mystery was solved. Lariper had bought the wrong compound, and with his lips saturated with the explosive material, had kissed Miss Stringer, and the concussion had produced the catastrophe.

There never was a rose without a thorn, a joy without a sorrow. There never, no, never was a—but it's too late to begin a sermon now, and I unwillingly refrain. Nothing has been found of the two unfortunates except a part of the shawl Miss Stringer had on, and which was discovered in the top of a tree, and the front piece of Lariper's cap and one of his boot heels, which were picked up in an adjoining lot. Thus perished two noble human beings. A deep gloom has been shed over the community, from which it will not soon recover, and the girls of the village have been taught a lesson which they will not readily forget.

Mournfully yours,

R. S. TRUEMAN.

LETTER XXX.

IN HONOR OF THE NATIVITY OF ONE GEORGE.

PINE GROVE, *Feb.* 23.

IT seems like a hollow mockery that no attention was paid to Washington's legal holiday in Rochester, except by the editors of newspapers, who are noted for paying attention to anything whereby they can shirk a day's work, and get out of issuing a paper at a time when everybody wants to see one the most. But, thank fortune! the fires of patriotism are not dead in this locality, neither do they smoulder, but flash in brilliant coruscations from our giant intellects, etc. We think too much of our uncles and auntecestors for that. The day was appropriately observed in the evening by a ball, given by Tommy Jones, in honor of Washington, who was a perfect gentleman, as near as I can find out by his biographers, who may be prejudiced, but I trust not.

THE PREPARATIONS.

The ball-room of the tavern was transformed into a model of neatness. Tommy had it all swept out, even under the seats; and had the windows washed, except such as were covered up with flags, which would have been unnecessary work. The kerosene lamps were decorated with tissue-paper embroidery, left over from fly time last summer; two pictures of the great forefather were hitched up with strings on to the wall; the flag of our country was festooned in graceful folds over the front window, and the floor was beeswaxed until it was a matter of life and death to maintain one's standing and dignity in crossing it. Two bird-cages with live birds in them rested gracefully upon pedestals, and a rat trap, with a tame rat in it, called blind Tom, on account of his eyesight, lent its beauty to the scene. The entire arrangements were elegant, grand, and unique, and reflect great credit upon the designer and executer. Tickets were placed at the popular price of \$1. Supper extra. I mean the price for supper was extra, not the supper. Tommy had a skirmish with the cook the day before, and she

quit, so Mrs. Jones had to get up the provender alone, and it wasn't very good.

THE GUESTS.

Everybody of consequence—myself among the number—was present. On general principles it is wrong to go to balls, but what can one do on a holiday, when there is no other way to celebrate except to dance? Mrs. Dany had on an alpaca dress, with two furbelows and three thingamajigs on it. I don't know the right names, and I can't get satisfactory answers when I ask. You know what I mean. She took Martha Washington's character. Mr. Dana had on his Sunday clothes and a pair of gloves, which, being a late addition to his wardrobe, he was observed to eye with wondering curiosity and evident satisfaction, when he thought no one was looking. He took, but did not sustain, the character of a gentleman. Mrs. J. Klinker was arrayed in a dress, which, I am confidentially informed, she has worn three winters at least. She appeared as Martha Washington, and was surprised to find six others who took the same part. Klinker couldn't come, being busily engaged in experimenting on per-

petual motion by observing the tail of his dog, which is in a state of continual wiggle. Matilda Hooker had on a white muslin robe de party, with low sleeves and short neck, both of which became her greatly. She wore an artificial rosebud in her raven locks, and danced like an angel every chance she could get. The Amory family came in their own lumber wagon, which was putting on considerable style, as they only lived three doors away. They were all dressed to kill, particularly Jimmy Amory, who had on a pair of fine boots. Mr. Amory appeared as Washington, and looked about as much like our departed forefather as a pumpkin would sculptured into a jack-o'-lantern. Mrs. J. Amory came as an Indian Princess, with a hatchet in her hand; Parson Wilks took the part of Demosthenes, but his wife had no character at all. Mrs. Scroon appeared as a fairy queen, and wore a linen-colored parasol, lined with red silk, which was quite becoming to her complexion. Altogether about forty were present, and the hall was brilliant with beauty—such as it was—and elegance—what there was of it.

THE DANCE.

The Terpsichorean performance commenced at

eight o'clock. Out this way everybody dances, and the fellows and girls don't stand around against the wall, pretending they can dance, but don't care to. When we dance, too, we dance. We do not sidle around in a careless, slipshod way, and walk about in a listless manner as if it was a bore. We go in—that expresses the idea. Billy Doo, the little Frenchman, tuned up his fiddle; Johnny Horner got his bugle oiled, and Hank Dubelbase prepared his violoncello for action. The people formed for a cotillon, five sets on the floor, all merry and jolly as spring chickens before decapitation overtakes them, and away they went at the word go. All hands around, swing to your places, right and left, ladies change—the way Gerker kept them going was a caution to people with weak ankles. Then they danced Virginia reel, Monnie Musk and Lady Washington, kicking up their festive heels in bewitching style; then another cotillon, and so on until midnight, when supper was announced.

THE SUPPER.

As I have already explained, the supper was quite poor. The boiled potatoes were underdone, the cabbage had been cooked in too much water,

the onions in too little, and the biscuit were like putty baked with a crust. The pork was tolerable, and the ham was well enough, except that the hand that seasoned it had been too prodigal of salt. The cold turkey was tough and stringy, the cucumbers hard and vinegarless, but the ketchup was bully. A cracker pudding was served up with an ointment made of butter and brown sugar, which was better than the pudding. Warm dried apple pie, cheese and hard cider concluded this branch of the festivities, and after drinking the toast, "George Washington and Tommy Jones—the first and last in the hearts of their countrymen—long may they wave," the party returned to the ball-room. Dancing was resumed and kept up until three o'clock, when the company dispersed.

TO SUM UP.

We had a splendid time. Nothing was said to offend the most fastidious, and everything passed off like a June day. Of course there were three or four fights down-stairs, as usually happens on such an occasion; and George Gilbert found it necessary to correct a young fellow who stepped on his wife's dress and ripped it, but he did it so

neatly, expeditiously, and effectually, that it was scarcely noticed in the ball-room except when the folks heard the young fellow going down-stairs four steps at a time. During the last dance some one threw a bunch of lighted fire-crackers into the hall, which made a general scattering. The officers of the law are after the miserable perpetrator of this dastardly outrage, whoever she or he may be, and no social standing, or influential relatives, or plethoric pocketbook can shield said person from punishment in case a capture is effected. Financially, Tommy Jones cleared about \$15, of which amount he proposes to donate five per cent. to the church. I wish Washington's birthday came once a week, instead of annually.

Yours all over,

R. S. TRUEMAN.

LETTER XXXI.

A REMARKABLE CLERICAL PERFORMANCE—IT NEVER BEFORE OCCURRED, AND NEVER WILL HAPPEN AGAIN.

PINE GROVE, *Feb.* 27.

I WENT to church last night. To an outsider this might appear a very unimportant matter, but the fact is it is something very unusual for me to do. I generally pass my Sunday evenings at Tommy Jones's tavern, where we discuss religious topics, and very profound arguments we have too. I have gained a great deal of useful information at these meetings, and, I have reason to believe, have disseminated not a little. It was my intention to go to Tommy's last night, as the subject of Transmogrification was to come up for elucidation. But on Saturday afternoon I received the following love-letter:

“Dear Truey:—Rev. L. Wilks, D.D., presents his hand and heart to you, and expressly

desires, for unanswerable reasons, that you present yourself at church on Sunday night and listen to one of the rippingest sermons you ever heard. I propose to give my congregation jesse and particular fits. He wishes for once that you break in upon your ancient custom of gathering yourself around the hospitable fireplace of Mr. Jones, as I know you are in the habit of doing every Sunday night, and hearken to some palatal truths. He promises you more fun than a horse can draw. I am going to make the people wince, and he wants you to see the operation performed. He will not take No for an answer. Come and see me.

Affectionately yours,

“REV. A. WILKS, D.D.”

What a letter for a minister to write, thought I. What with his “he’s” and “I’s,” and his uncommon familiarity, I was surprised to death, or nearly so. I believe I saw the point. He wanted his sermon reported for the newspapers, and he imagined I would do it. I hardly knew what to do at first, but finally I wrote a brief reply signifying my acceptance, and carried it over to him. It was an awful sacrifice to give up Tommy Jones’s, and the pitcher of warm cider,

well peppered, the tobacco, the genial spirits that usually assembled there, the theological jollity, and all those little points that go to make up real enjoyment; but I did it like a man, or martyr, and I have not made up my mind which. I went over, however, and found the church well filled with people, it having been understood that Parson Wilks was to throw himself extensively. Deacon Amory walked me into his pew, impudently remarking that he was glad to see me on the track of reformation. The parson evidently had made extensive preparations, for all around him, on the chairs, and pulpit, and table, and floor, were piled a great number of books, about as many as I ever saw together before. There were big books and little ones; new books and old ones; gilt-edged books and books in plain binding; trim and neat-looking books, and shabby books with leaves all askew and evidently in the last stages of literary consumption; books by ancient authors and by modern ones; books of history, of theology, of poetry and of romance, all piled around the pulpit in wonderful confusion. It looked as though Parson Wilks was in a state of intellectual siege, and had barricaded himself with this

literary fortification, to prevent, or overcome, the attacks of his argumentative enemies. It was a singular-looking scene, and one seldom seen. I was astonished, amazed, and confounded. So was Deacon Amory. So were all of them. Parson Wilks had on an old ragged coat (eccentricity), a frayed collar (more eccentricity), and the bow of his necktie was twisted around under his right ear (ignorance). He certainly presented a very discreditable appearance. After the choir had overtured and the usual prayer had been prayed, Parson Wilks, more nervous and excited than I ever saw him before, announced his text, to wit: "It may be better to give something than to receive nothing, but it's hunky to receive, nevertheless." He said the world was divided into two classes, givers and receivers. If he were to judge the outside people by the inhabitants of Pine Grove, he should state the proportion to be one giver to forty-nine receivers. Here he read Shakespeare's "Measure for Measure." The liberality of most men consisted of profuse expressions of sympathy, which was all very well in its way, but a poor way at best. Sandwiches made out of words and ideas never could keep the hungry from starvation. (Cheers.) To illustrate

the point he read the "Prisoner of Chillon." If charity covereth a multitude of sins, as has been suggested, why does not some one throw a mantle of shimplasters over the wickedness of Pine Grove? (Tremendous applause.) Here he quoted largely from the works of Zoroaster, and read two chapters of Greeley's History of the Rebellion. The charity of Pine Grove was like a sore throat, so enveloped with red flannel you couldn't see the sore. He would not be so urgent in this matter, but we ought to soar higher in our benevolent aspirations. We should cast our bread upon mill-ponds, or our cake would be dough. The parson then read fifty pages out of Miss Leslie's cookery book, the first part of Butler's Analogy, and a portion of Lalla Rookh. Continuing his discourse, he said it was plain that while it was the duty of all to give freely, it was equally the duty of all to receive as much as possible. He illustrated this by reading a chapter from "Great Expectations," introducing Wemmick and his love of portable property, and afterwards recited that wonderful Hamletian soliloquy, which I never hear without shedding tears of distress, beginning, "To give, or not to give—that's what's the matter." He then went on to say that

charity never killed any one, although he knew a few whom it would be charity to kill. He looked at me very impressively, and I looked at him in a dignified way, pretending that I did not know he was alluding at me. He then read "The Robber's Revenge," "Ivanhoe," "Hiawatha," three or four of Mrs. Mulbach's novels, and the last presidential message. He said the charity of the people was like an ostrich, although he disliked to make game of such a subject, for it always hid its head in the sands of time. He illustrated this by reading a few chapters of natural history, and a rapid review of geological formations. By this time half the congregation was asleep, and the other half would have been, had not madness ruled the hour in their hearts. By dexterous management the parson succeeded in keeping their attention fixed upon him, using such means as knocking heavy books off from the pulpit upon the floor, stamping with his feet, and talking in an uproarious tone of voice. It was the strangest sermon I ever listened to. He quoted and read from at least fifty different books, and his sermon occupied from seven until eleven o'clock. No one, not even himself, knows how much longer he would have preached, but the people had

dropped out by degrees until at the last-named hour only about a dozen were left down-stairs. The sexton went up into the gallery and awoke the choir, and when they had sung an apology for a hymn, as choirs are apt to do under such adverse circumstances, the meeting adjourned. I tried to take a short-hand report of the sermon for your benefit, but it turned out the longest hand report I ever wrote. The floor of the pew in which I sat had three inches of lead-pencil whittlings on it, and I got so sleepy that the last twenty pages of my manuscript are almost illegible. It took forty cents' worth of foolscap to write it down. I shall be unable to attend church for some time. I write this with my left hand, my right one being disabled.

Yours distressedly,

R. S. TRUEMAN.

LETTER XXXII.

AN ACCOUNT OF AN ELECTION, WHEREIN FOREORDINATION IS SOMEWHAT CONSPICUOUS.

PINE GROVE, *March 8.*

E had an election here yesterday, which I believe to have been unparalleled in the annals of Pine Grove. We had a little difficulty in our Republican caucus to start with, and I was unexpectedly beaten, through the machinations of Parson Wilks, John Klinker and other shining lights, on the nomination for Justice of the Peace. But the noble, lion-hearted Democracy, out of pure sympathy and a desire to strengthen the balance of their ticket, put me on, but I don't know whether I am elected or not. In fact, no one can tell who the lucky fellows are, as you will learn by reading this letter. The Democrats have made us lots of trouble of late years by counterfeiting our tickets, and the question was

ably discussed by the town committee as to the means of preventing it this year. The best suggestion was made by Jimmy Amory, who proposed that the Republican ticket be written out with pen and ink, and, as no Democrat here can write even his own name, it would be utterly impossible to counterfeit the ballots. The suggestion did not prevail, however, and the tickets were printed in Rochester, as usual. As usual, too, the Democrats had counterfeit ballots. How they got hold of a copy of the genuine, is a mystery to those who don't know anything about it. It is supposed, however, that Tommy Jones went over to Deacon Amory's, who had charge of the tickets, in the night time, raised the window of the deacon's bedroom, and, with a long stick with a bent pin in the end of it, succeeded in abstracting the object of his ambition. Much as I am opposed to the party, I cannot but honor their shrewdness and bravery. Being a justice of the peace, I acted as one of the election board. Everything passed off quietly until noon, when there was an unusual commotion outside the tavern where the polls were held. Presently, amidst great cheering, in came Betsy McCracken, with a Democratic ticket in her hand. She marched up to the ballot-box

and handed it to Tommy Jones, who, seeing its political complexion, was about to chuck it into the box, but I prevented him, and handed back the ticket to Betsy. She was highly indignant, and, judging from the odor of gin and tansy (with which I am familiar) that she brought in with her, was slightly intoxicated. "Do you reject a free woman's ballot?" said she, striking an attitude which was not very impressive, on account of her having a wooden leg. "The constitution, my dear Mrs. McCracken," I began to explain, "is the bulwark of our liberties, and has been handed down to us by our celebrated forefathers, of whom you may have heard." "The devil take the four or five fathers," said she in a semi-profane manner; "all I want to know is whether you will take this certificate." "Have you been—ahem!—naturalized, my dear?" "No, but I have been civilized. It's no use talking butter to you. I am a taxpayer, and I demand that the right of, suffering be given me." "Why, Betsy," said I, "you are not a taxpayer. You haven't any property." "Indeed, sir, I am a taxpayer. I pay on my dog every year, and three dollars at that." "Betsy, my love," said I, somewhat taken back, "your claim is certainly an excellent one, and

your idea of woman's rights is certainly commendable. I will consult with my associates in office." Tommy Jones, John Wiley and myself talked the thing over. Tommy was in favor of receiving the ballot, the more so as it was a Democratic one, but the rest of us were of the opinion that it would be illegal. While we were consulting together, in came Sam Digly. Sam is the only colored person in town, and quite a pet in consequence of this fact. He offered his ticket, and it was taken, and put into the ballot-box. You should have seen the McCracken then: she stamped her wooden foot vehemently; she raved, and tore around frightfully, and delivered one of the most extraordinary extemporaneous orations I ever had the misery of hearing. By this time the crowd in the bar-room, excited beyond control by the curious spectacle, was jostling and jamming around in a fearful way, and at last, with a mighty surge, the boys pushed over the table, and the ballot-box, falling upon the floor, was broken open and the tickets scattered all over. "Protect the purity of the ballot," shouted Tommy Jones, making herculean efforts to get hold of the box. "We will," cried out a dozen other Democrats pressing forward to assist. The box was secured,

the tickets picked up and placed in it, and when we had nailed it up, and order had been restored, the voting proceeded. I noticed some of the Democrats whispering together during the afternoon and feeling unusually jolly, which was rather an uncommon circumstance. I observed that even Tommy Jones relaxed in vigilance and didn't challenge more than thirty voters, which action on his part was somewhat surprising, as he always makes it a point to challenge at least half the Republican voters. When the election closed the poll list showed that 318 names of voters had been registered. We opened the box—of all astonishing things this was the astonishingest—and counted the ballots, and there were 774 tickets in that box, and 690 of them were Democratic, besides two bunches of fifty each which were tied together, and which looked suspicious. You should have heard Tommy Jones blow up the Town Clerk for not keeping a correct list of the voters! Well, to make a short story a little longer, the Election Board refused to make a canvass, except Tommy Jones, who went on alone and made one, and reported the entire Democratic ticket elected by over 600 majority. There are some people who think that when Tommy cried out

to preserve the purity of the ballot, that he did not mean what he said, and acted accordingly. I don't know how the thing will be decided, but I presume it will be thrown into the hands of the Board of Supervisors. If the Board accept the returns, why then I shall continue in office as Justice of the Peace. I hurriedly close. Dinner is nearly ready, for I smell the onions.

Hungrily yours,

R. S. TRUEMAN.

LETTER XXXIII.

ABOUT THE WEATHER, AND WHAT INJURY IT CAN
DO IN THE WAY OF INSPIRATIONS.

PINE GROVE, *March 15.*

N all my correspondence with your excellent chronicling and Democratic journal, I have heretofore studiously avoided making the slightest allusion to the weather. I can lay that flattering unction to my soul, anyway, as a certain poet says whose name I do not remember. What I have suffered and endured in feeling by so doing is known only to my family, who have had to catch it in consequence of my forbearance. When I am not blowing to you I have to blow at them, to even the thing up. What you have been spared by my generosity ought to call forth your heartfelt thanks, and I have a right to expect, and hope to receive, a generous reward in token of

your appreciative spirit. But at last the time has come for me to gush. I cannot hold in any longer. The invigorating influence of this new spring balm is too powerful, and I must let off steam. The rising of the sun nowadays is perfectly delicious, as my daughter quaintly remarks. The fading darkness; the gray twilight; the lighting up of the eastern sky; the rising of the valley mists; the crimson blush of early morn; the scattering of the fleecy clouds; the final appearance of the god of day on the stage of action after nature has rolled up the curtain of night—all these are sweet and refreshing to the hungry soul panting for communion with essentiality. (N.B.—I stole that last sentence out of an old composition that my daughter wrote, and it sounded so kind of pretty I thought I would pass it off for my own.) I don't go much on personal observation of sun-rises, and am perfectly willing to take anybody's word to any extent concerning that spectacle rather than investigate it myself. I never got up but once in my life to see the sun get up, and I never felt so miserable in all my born days after the show was over. All the day I couldn't get over the impression that I hadn't

had any sleep in a month. But such weather as we are having here in Pine Grove is worth looking after and keeping. We can sit out in the open air all day long on the tavern steps, and lay out our plans for our spring work, and talk about the people, and abuse them just as naturally. And all this in the slandered month of March, too! Where's your weather prophets, and such like, now? I have written thusly merely as an introduction to a sweet little pastoral poem on spring, which I have kindly consented to incorporate into my letter, and I didn't know how to present it in any other way so that it would come in properly. Is it necessary for me to say that the poem is from the heart, head, and pen of my accomplished and lovely daughter, MAUDRINE LILLIANE TRUEMAN? I trust not.

SPRINGTIDE.

Oh, goodness! ain't I tickled
 To find that spring is here—
 The balmy air, the sunshine,
 And all I love so dear?

I'd trade off all the winters (and be glad to do it) that I ever
 saw or knew,
 If all springs that are yet to come (and I don't care how
 many there may be) were like this—wouldn't you?

It's nice to go out walking
Without your hat or shawl,
And you needn't wear your rubbers
For fear you'll slip and fall ;
For now the sidewalks are all dry (leastwise all the plank
ones are), you need not fear to go,
And leave your shoes and stockings off (and I tell you its
splendid to go barefooted)—where's the harm I'd like to
know ?

It's lovely for to snuff up
The pure, clear air of morn,
And sweet to watch the sunrise
The hills and vales adorn,
And let the gentle breezes kiss (and I prefer them to any of
the fellows I know anything about) your hair and blow
your nose—
I tell you what it's lots of fun (and cheap too) as you can
well suppose.

It makes me feel so frisky,
I don't know what to do
But laugh and kick my heels up
And feel so good all through,
To think that Spring has sprung a trap (and I hope it will
always be such a successful hunter as it has proved this
time) and caught the Winter fast,
And, oh, I most sincerely hope (and if it goes back on its
promise I'll be madder than fury) the reformation'll
last.

As no ideas of my own concerning this elegant

weather can be of any account after reading this poem, I will destroy them and bury them in the grave of forgetfulness.

Solemnly yours truly,

R. S. TRUEMAN.

LETTER XXXIV.

INCIDENTS AND ACCIDENTS.

PINE GROVE, *March 17.*

PECCAVI.



WOULD like to discount about twenty-five per cent. from the statements made in my last letter concerning the weather. I knew at the time it was rash to go very heavy on the month of March, but I did feel so good over the balmy days and the fair prospect of their continuance, that I permitted my feelings to overpower my judgment. There is only one way now to rectify the error, and you can do it if you understand the reetifying business. I request as a matter of friendship (and if you love me as much as you pretend to, you will do it) that you proceed speedily to collect the entire edition of the *Democrat and Chronicle* containing my unfortunate letter, and, having done so, destroy by fire the evi-

dence of my weakness. My daughter joins with me in this little request and seconds the motion.

LOCAL ITEMS.

We do not have many occurrences here that would interest you. Whenever anything unusual takes place I always notify you, and give you a conscientious and truthful report. I wouldn't give any other kind. I couldn't do otherwise. Not having any fancy to fall back upon, I can deal only in facts. It gives me pleasure to inform you that Mrs. Stringer has a felon on her hand as big as a pumpkin, or smaller. She has them so much that the people talk about indicting her for felon-y and make her furnish the evidence. Mrs. Dany has got a boil, which she tried to keep to herself, but in spite of all she could do it leaked out. Matilda Hooker has the rheumatism bad, and from this I conclude that she is a member of the Sore-osis. (Explanation : This joke is intended only for students and understanders of Latin. If I had only been born in Latinny, and this paper was published there, everybody could see the point without my calling especial attention to it. I dislike to write out an exposition of its shrewd-

ness, and tell the reader what a noble thing it is, because it has a tendency to make it thin, but I do want to have it appreciated; maybe I can never execute another like it.) Mr. Wiley has had his axe ground, and offered to bet that he can chop 9,000 cords of wood in thirty years, and attend church regularly. Betsy McCracken broke her lamp yesterday, but can't tell how she did it. She wants a little light on the subject. It was a nice lamp. Everybody thought it a brilliant one when lighted. There was considerable excitement here on Wednesday. While I was showing my daughter how to split wood and save her poor old father a portion of his hard work, a message was sent to me that a waiter at Tommy Jones's tavern had fallen out of the second story window upon the sidewalk, and had been seriously injured. I went right down there, and found, to my chagrin, that the waiter was an old tea-tray that Mrs. Jones had accidentally let fall, and that one corner of it where it struck was a little jammed. I afterwards went to see the messenger. I found him. He had an unpleasant smile on his features. Lest it might appear like boasting, I will not state what I did to that messenger, but merely remark that I understand he is at present under the care

of an eminent doctor of your city, and that he will be wholly unable for some time to come to perpetrate any more serious jokes on yours truly, or anybody else's truly. There was a great destruction of tea here yesterday afternoon, and the price has gone up ten cents a pound. It was occasioned by the Sewing Society having one of its regular weekly gossips. Tommy Jones has got a new almanac for this year, which actually tells the state of the weather for every day in the season. It's awful handy. You can look ahead and see when it will rain or snow, or be pleasant, and make your calculations accordingly. It runs a little singular to be sure, but I guess it's all right. Thus: 1, 2, 3, pleasant; 4, 5, 6, rainy; 7, 8, 9, clear and cold; 10, 11, 12, cloudy and hot; and then it goes back to first principles, like this: 13, 14, 15, pleasant; 16, 17, 18, rainy; 19, 20, 21, clear and cold; and so on, just like the circulating decimals in arithmetic we used to swear about in our school days. This looks a little queer, but, as I am not much of a judge of almanacs, my opinion concerning it wouldn't be of any value.

I would like to tell you about a new suit of clothes Captain Long has just bought, and a new set of hair-pins his wife has got, and a great many

other things that I know would interest you, but I am getting up an "Encyclopedia for Imitators," and this takes about all my time.

Hard workingly yours,

R. S. TRUEMAN.

LETTER XXXV.

OUR CORRESPONDENT INCREASES HIS GROCERY STORE OF USEFUL KNOWLEDGE, AND, AFTER LEARNING ALL HE CARES TO, SEEKS THE SHADES OF HIS HOME SOMEWHAT SURREPTITIOUSLY.

PINE GROVE, *March 25.*

PEN this letter more in sorrow than in wrath; in a spirit of deep humility; with all my pride vanished, and amidst the dispelling of ambitious hopes. Personally, I feel like a wet dish-cloth. If it were not for my position in society here, and the carrying out of the great work of regeneration and moral improvement in which I am so actively engaged, I should feel inclined to follow the advice of one Iago and go hang myself. But, as I am situated, I propose to see the show out if it lasts all summer. The entertainment has been very fair so far, and I think I had better stay to the afterpiece. You see I had just set up a long row of mental blocks

in a straight line, and, while intellectually contemplating them, some one up and hit the first one, it hit its neighbor, it fell against the next one, and so, rap-i-ty-rap, away they all tumbled. 'Twas ever thus from childhood's hour. For some time I have been treading very lightly on the moral corns of our Pine Grove people, and have been congratulating myself that all our old scores had been settled and receipts passed. I had even made up my mind that I was quite a literary character, and that the folks here appreciated me. I believed that I had been successful in dragging Pine Grove out of the obscurity in which it had been enveloped, and placing it before the eye of the public in all its native modesty and brilliancy. I have been undeceived; my fond hopes have received a black eye. Here is what did it. On Tuesday afternoon the Sewing Society held a meeting for a little sewing and a good deal of tea and an immense quantity of talk, at the house of Deacon Robert Amory. I had long had a desire to ascertain what thirty women, who had neither the right to vote, nor swear, nor drink, nor chew tobacco, could find to talk about through the entire afternoon and evening. Place an equal number of

men in the same situation and I will guarantee that at least half of them will dig out within an hour, and the remainder cut their own throats if compelled to stay. Being friendly with Jimmy, the Deacon's son, I got him to secrete me in a room off from the parlor, where there wasn't any danger of being disturbed, and where I could hear everything that was said. It was managed so nicely that no one but Jimmy and myself knew anything about it. About one o'clock the women assembled on the come-early-and-stay-late and not-go-away-while-there-is-anything-left-to-eat-principle, and shortly after the chairwoman, Mrs. Scroon, tried to call them to order, which, of course, she didn't. The roll was then called, and three ladies who were absent were fined each half a pound of young hyson tea, at which all the rest smacked their lips with a degree of satisfaction that was pleasant to observe. After this Mrs. Scroon said the conversation at the last meeting had been of a desultory character, and she desired that the Society at its present session attend more strictly to business. She then announced the subject for discussion to be R. S. Trueman. Imagine my feelings! Fear and curiosity alone prevented me from jumping out of

the window and fleeing from the wrath to come ! The chairwoman then called for the speakers on the affirmative. Would you believe it—not a man of them responded ! My situation was becoming disagreeable. When the negative was called, no less than twenty began talking all at once, and the hubbub was so great it was impossible to understand anything. But Mrs. Scroon quieted them down after a little, telling them that she appreciated their anxiety to talk, and didn't blame them a particle for wanting to be heard, but she thought that business would be expedited by hearing the speakers in order. She therefore would first call upon Mrs. Dany. Mrs. Dany said she always considered that 'ar Trueman a villain of the deepest dye material, and had often wondered how he came to live in these days of culture and refinement. He ought to have been born and associated with Dick Turpin and Sixteen String Jack. That would have been his proper place. She was of the opinion that he was only let to live to show folks how wicked a man could be and still exist. Matilda Hooker rose to state her fervent belief that no punishment here or hereafter could be found sufficiently severe to meet the case of

Trueman. She would like to run him through a clothes-wringer, and make him as flat as his Pine Grove letters are. Mrs. Stringer said that this 'ere Trueman had poked fun at her in the newspapers because she had a felon. If she only fell on him once, the *Democrat and Chronicle* would be obliged to find a new correspondent. Mrs. Wiley desired to remark that it was a shame for this fiend to publish such a lot of trash as his daughter's poetry. Why, she herself could take a broom for a pen, a bucket of tar for a bottle of ink, a ten-acre lot for a sheet of paper, and write better poetry in five minutes than Maudrine Trueman could in a year. The girl herself was as nice a girl as ever ate bread and butter and cried for more, but her dad was continually putting her up to write trash for his own use, and he makes her think that these poems are the work of inspiration. Miss Spilkum said that she believed all of Trueman's letters were the work of ginspiration. If she were only Shylock, she would demand, not one pound of Trueman's flesh in expiation of his evil deeds, but 162 pounds. (This is my exact avoirdupois.) Mrs. Hornby was disgusted with the airs them Truemanians put on, just because the

old man wrote lying letters to the papers. She wished that she had learned to write in girlhood's sunny hours ; she'd show this audacious intermeddler what was that. Mrs. Jewjaw expressed an opinion that hanging would be beneficial to this scoundrel Trueman, and the longer time he remained strung up the less probability there would be of his continuing his infamous literary career. She offered to go for a clothes line. The proposition was greeted with vociferous applause, and, pending a vote, I thought it both becoming and proper in me to get out of the way with all the celerity I could command. I carefully raised a window, jumped out, and made the best time on record for home. I don't know what to do. I am living in mortal terror. I dare not show myself upon the street, lest an infuriated mob of Amazons set upon me with a view of trying a hempen experiment. I do not like to be experimented upon. I always make a failure of it.

Distractedly yours,

R. S. TRUEMAN.

LETTER XXXVI.

AUSCULTATORY UNFORTUNATES, AND ANOTHER UN-
FORTUNATE.

PINE GROVE, *March 27, 1871.*



SINCE I lightly hinted to Parson Wilks that I thought my life would not be shortened if I failed to read, or hear read, his written mumblings, I have not been troubled with him. His appearance with his warm roll of manuscript had become so frequent that every day was a read-letter day. I knew, though, that his machine could not so easily be stopped, and although I must have interfered somewhat with his main-spring of action, I was confident that the disease would break out in a new spot before any alarming length of time intervened. So I was not at all surprised when I opened the back door this morning, to let Mrs. Trueman out to

split up the kindling wood for breakfast, to find a large envelope on the threshold. I opened it, removed the extract, and found the following:

AUSCULTATORY UNFORTUNATES.

It may perhaps be as well to state at the outset of this essay that, notwithstanding the professional appearance of the title, this is not a therapeutic thesis. It has little of medicinal properties or diagnostic qualities in its composition; it has no remedies to recommend or to advertise, and the writer has no commission to secure from the sale of those that might be proposed. Indeed, so far from relating to bodily ills, it will be found devoid of any allusion to such misfortunes and will confine itself strictly to the consideration of an important branch of social ethics.

But the long-winded inscription is by no means an unnecessary or an unnatural one. It expresses in two words that for which an entire column will have to be used for the purpose of elucidation. It is terse and compact. It is the concentration of the odor of a bunch of violets into a single drop of perfume. It is the entire production reduced by mental hydraulic pressure

into a single line. So much by way of explanation of the doorplate of this essay.

Auscultatory unfortunates are those people who never hear anything aright, whether it be told to them in the lightest of whispers, or in trumpet-tongued accents. It matters little what the subject is about: a choice tidbit of scandal; the trimming of Mrs. Brown's new dress; the estimated value of the new piano that the Perkinses have bought; what Mrs. A. said to Mrs. B., who told her husband, who related it to a friend, who rehearsed it to the unfortunate—all these things, and thousands of other things that enter into life's daily occurrences, never go direct from the tympanum to the brain of this class of hearers, but become magnified and distorted even during that trifling journey.

If this ended the matter the evil might be borne in silence. If the active imagination could be allowed to have full sway, and the hearer not be permitted to make use of that unruly member, the tongue, why then the imagination might revel in all its power, and no injury could be done save to the mental reveller, which damage would be of little consequence to any one else.

But, alas! since the sharing of secrets with friends has come into fashion and practice, there is no stopping. The friend to whom the secret is confided has another friend who must bear with her the burden, and the latter has a very dear acquaintance who ought to know it, and so the story, whatever it may be, spreads from pole to pole, until the whole world is acquainted with the affair, and perfectly understands everything that really has happened, and along with it a hundred other things that never did happen.

It can easily be imagined what the effect must be when one of these persons, who never hear aright, wholesales some information to another who is troubled with the same misfortune, and who, conscious of the importance of the communication, and seized with an ambitious desire to disseminate the news, bursts the bonds of the sacred pledge never to tell as long as she lives really and truly, and goes into the retailing business. The story will probably run after this manner.

Mrs. A. to Mrs. B.—“I hear that Miss Blinkum is about to marry a gentleman of wealth.”

Mrs. C. to Mrs. D.—“I learn, on the best of authority, that Miss Blinkum is going to be mar-

ried to a gentleman from New York. They say he moves in the best society and is reported to be worth \$100,000. But you need not mention it."

Mrs. D. to Miss E.—"O Jernsha, have you heard the news? Miss Blinkum is on the point of marrying a gentleman named Greeny, who is in business in New York, and who, I am given to understand, is a millionaire. He has a splendid house on the avenue, and a country seat at Newport, and is almost worshipped by all his acquaintances."

Miss E. (spitefully) to Miss F.—"Say, did you know that everybody is talking about that horrid Jane Blinkum who lives in your street, and that she is engaged to Mr. Greenbury, and they are to be married shortly? They say he has retired from business and is living on his income. He owns several houses in New York and Boston, and spends the summer at Newport, Long Branch, and Saratoga. He must be a person of exquisite taste to marry such a stick as she is. don't you think so?"

Miss F. who is gifted with a powerful imagination, to Mrs. G. who takes the information as she does her tea—by the cupful—and likes it highly seasoned: "Oh Mrs. Gensing, they do say

that Jane Blinkum is going to be married next week in the evening, at the Church of the Holy Fashionables, and is going to have a dozen brides maids, and a brass band, and an organist from Philadelphia, and her intended's name is George Dreandury. He is a retired merchant, about forty years old, and very handsome. He is enormously wealthy; is worth his millions, and all invested in bonds and such things. They say he owns whole blocks of houses and stores in different cities, and that he passes the most of his time in Europe, where he is received *with marked attention* by all the crowned heads. The bride and groom are going to take a wedding tour around the world, and expect to be gone a year. Did you ever hear anything like it? It seems like a dream."

So it does, my dear Miss F., and it will grow more and more like a fearful dream as the story is continued and retold by the several Mrs. G. H. I. J. K.'s, and all the rest of the alphabet. What would the story of Mrs. Z. be like, do you suppose? The question is an unanswerable one.

The illustration that has been used is a feeble one. Suppose the story to be of a different nature;

one affecting the character of a person who is entirely innocent of any guilt or crime. Such things are common, and are often started from malicious motives. The injury that is then done cannot be estimated. How they glory and gloat over it! How, instead of making use of that charity which ought rather to conceal and extenuate, they bring to bear their batteries of bitterness and hate! There is no preventing it. An idle word, a thoughtless act, will set in motion this social car of Juggernaut, which spares neither the innocent nor the guilty.

Well, these things have always been so, and this class of persons starting with Cain, who is the first recorded example of imperfect auscultation, has existed nearly from the beginning of the world, and there is a strong probability of the family resemblance and mental attributes continuing for all time.

Now what ought to be done with this class of uncertain hearers and still more uncertain repeaters? It is too much to expect that the Sapphiral method of punishment for telling untruths will be revised! Indeed it is hardly to be wished, for there is no telling what fearful results might ensue from having so large a number of people

suddenly swept out of the land of the living! War decimates sufficiently now for the purposes of human economy, and this addition would be monstrous. The few remaining inhabitants, excellent people as, necessarily, they would be, would become nomadic tribes, and, deprived of their accustomed abuse and wordy misuse, would pine away and soon become extinct. If there were only some social Botany Bay to which the great retinue of wilful fabricators and scandal disseminators could be transported, it might help the matter along, and would certainly furnish abundant employment for a long time to come to our crippled and decaying merchant marine.

In conclusion, it is evident that no suitable earthly punishment can be found that is adapted to the exigencies of the case. People will continue to suffer as they heretofore have suffered, and the banner of the auscultatory unfortunates will flutter defiantly in the breeze until the end of time approaches, and the beginning of the millennium is at hand.

Now if the manuscript had stopped here, I should not have minded it so much. But along with it was a so-called poem. Now true poetry

is my especial province. I adore it with so much of genuine love and unbounded respect, that I cannot prevail upon myself to approach it. I love the muses—except the mewses of Deacon Amory's cat next door. But here is the poem:

TINNIE AND I.

There never were truer lovers
Than Tinnie and I;
And we love each other dearly,
But don't know why—
For Tinnie has neither a handsome face,
And I am lacking in wit and in grace,
But we love each other
Like sister and brother,
Tinnie and I.

Poor thing! she is almost friendless,
And I am too;
And this may be the reason
That makes us so true;
This the common cord of sympathy
That binds me to her, and her to me,
And weaves us, whether
Or not, together,
Tinnie and I.

Her loving blue eyes look upward
Into my face,
And I hold her to my bosom
In fond embrace:

And I whisper to her the love I feel,
That shall last through life, come woe, come weal.
 Hope and trust combine,
 And the stars of love shine
 For Tinnie and I.

 The world may call us silly,
 But what care we ?
 Our hearts are knit together
 With constancy.
And our love is fervent and strong and pure,
And lasting as long as life shall endure ;
 The world can never
 Our true hearts dissever,
 Tinnie and I.

 Though we are poor and humble,
 We know full well
 That love can abide with poverty
 As with riches dwell ;
And that wealth alone can never move
The heart to deeper and truer love,
 Nor to such happiness
 As we two possess—
 Tinnie and I.

 She never spoke unkindly
 In all her life,
 And yet—and yet, I cannot
 Make her my wife—
For Tinnie is only a kitten sweet,
With glossy fur and the daintiest feet,

But we love one another
Like sister and brother—
My Tinnie and I.

I made the fire that morning, and a conspicuous part of it consisted of Parson Wilks's last production.

Heatedly yours,

R. S. TRUEMAN.

LETTER XXXVII.

WHAT HAPPENED IN PINE GROVE AT THE FEAST
OF ST. MOMUS.

PINE GROVE, *April 5.*



I HAVE been unable to hold a pen for a week in consequence of going barefooted too early in the season, which resulted in a cold in my feet. I can bear a cold foot better than a cold shoulder, and I have had experience in both. The doctor whom I called gave me a little advice and a great deal of medicine. By paying no attention to the former, and religiously refraining from the latter, I am on the road to happiness again. I celebrate it by writing to you. The first of April was not observed here in the usual accustomed manner, and there were but few victims. The performance began on Friday afternoon with a joke from Mehitabel Jenkins, the schoolma'am. She told the chil-

dren that school would keep the next day, and gave as a reason for such an unusual proceeding, that the trustees had so ordered. Now the children have every confidence in their teacher, and implicitly believe whatever she tells them. The next morning the little innocents, and some of the big ones also, came to school, many of them trudging a mile through the mud. They waited outside the school-house door, which was locked, for an hour or more, but no teacher appeared. At last they sent a delegation of twenty over to Mehitabel to find out the cause of her absence. They saw her. She laughed in their faces, she did, and told them it was April Fool's Day. The delegation returned and reported. Then the delegation and the rest of the scholars formed themselves into a committee of the whole, and proceeded to break open the school-house door, and, having effected an entrance, they went to work by force of arms and feet and ripped up all the benches, besmeared the walls with ink, tore the books and the maps to pieces, demolished the stove, and utterly ruined the library, which consisted of twenty-four valuable books of a biographical and historical nature, extremely interesting to young persons

below the age of ten. After this they carried the chair and the ruler of the schoolma'am into the yard and burned them up. Then one of the scholars returned to the schoolroom, and wrote upon the blackboard these words: "AprIl -FUle uS-AgAn-wiL-U-DarN yE." Their fiendishness having reached this culminating point, they repaired to their several places of abode. The trustees of the district, learning the facts in the case, wrote a polite little note to Miss Jenkins, asking her what in the—say dickens—she meant by her conduct; advised her that her services would no longer be required, and accompanied with it was a bill for damages of \$23.14, requesting its immediate payment. They intimated that they heartily appreciated the joke, and trusted that she did. As they found it impossible to get a suitable teacher for less than \$7 a month and board, they recalled Mehitabel, pretending it was through pity, but it is understood that she is only to teach another year and then she must walk. Of course this joke of Miss Jenkins became known all over the village early in the day, and it put people on their guard, so that few were sold. Tommy Jones lost his pocket-book, containing considerable money, on

the sidewalk, and it laid there undisturbed for three hours, no one daring to pick it up for fear of being fooled. At last Tommy found it right where he had dropped it, and he says he never knew before how much of good there was in the first of April. Jimmy Amory got off a little joke on me which I fear will get into circulation, through improper channels, and, consequently, I think it best to tell it myself. He came over to see me Saturday afternoon, and in a mysterious manner asked me if I knew that Parson Wilks had a book in press. As I had not heard of it, I expressed some doubts on the subject, but Jimmy assured me that it was so. My curiosity was excited. The idea of the literary talent of Pine Grove making itself heard through the medium of book publication so filled me and thrilled me with exultation, that I rushed over to the Parson's to bestow upon him my sincere congratulations, and to find out whether he had tapped another barrel of cider. I found the Parson at home, and made my errand known. He looked somewhat perplexed, and seemed to hesitate about telling me. I assured him of my secrecy, and offered to swear on a pile of dictionaries a mile high that I would never

reveal what he might tell me, at which he looked more perplexed than ever. At length a broad smile overcast his intellectual features. "I have it," said he. "Young Amory was in here an hour ago, while I was writing and copying letters, and he probably observed what I was doing. The book I have in press, that he mentioned, is undoubtedly my letter-book, in which I copy my letters, and the press is an ordinary letter-press. There it stands with the book in it now. Ah, friend Trueman, the rascal was too much for you, and this is the first day of April." I did not linger to find out about the cider, but came away at once to find Jimmy. He was *non est*, as we say in Latin. I don't know whether I was April fooled or not. There was a book in press, that is certain, but it wasn't what I thought it ought to be. I can't make up my mind that I was sold, but yet—

Querily yours,

R. S. TRUEMAN.

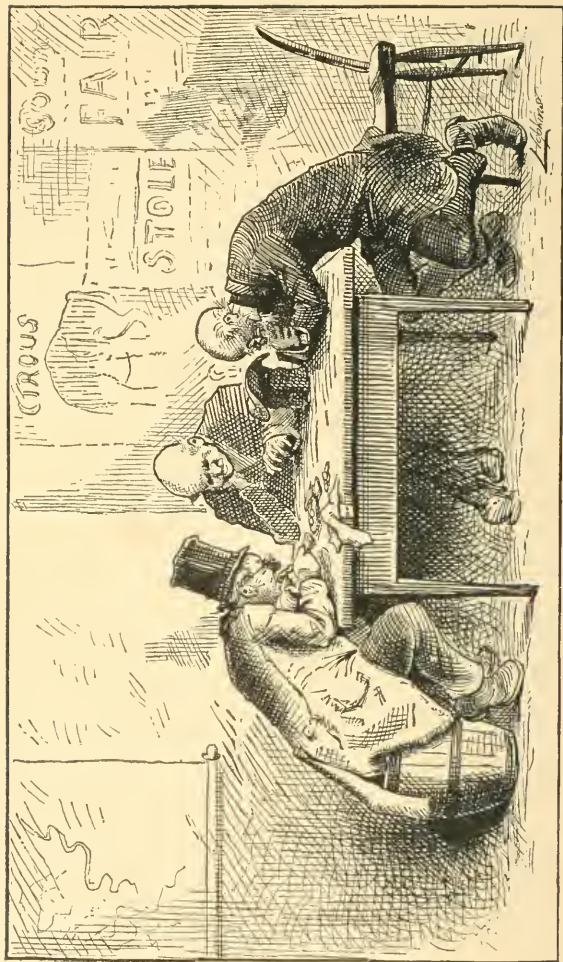
LETTER XXXVIII.

CLEARLY DEMONSTRATES THAT TWO, OR EVEN THREE HEADS ARE NOT BETTER THAN ONE, AND CONTAINS A FINANCIAL TRANSACTION SOMEWHAT DISREPUTABLE.

PINE GROVE, *April 20.*

 HAPPENED to be a witness of a little transaction that occurred here last night, that illustrated so clearly and forcibly the natural depravity of the heart of even the best of men, that I cannot refrain from relating it. The incident has become so firmly fixed in my memory, that I never shall rest easy until I out with it. We have meeting here in the church every Wednesday night, and the plate is passed to gather in whatever stray change there may be on the premises. The money is taken charge of by Deacon Amory. There have been suspicions that the deacon failed to account for all that passed into his hands, but as his system of book-

keeping is not the clearest in the world, no one could prove the charge. I went to church as usual last night, and lingering for a moment after the exercises were concluded, my attention was attracted by loud talking about the pulpit. I beheld Parson Wilks, Deacon Amory and John Wiley engaged in an animated discussion about the money. Deacon Amory was trying to get hold of it, and would not allow the other two to count it, which they insisted upon doing. They had pretty high words about it, but at last agreed to go over to Tommy Jones's and count it together. I offered my services, which were declined, but that made no difference to me as I expected the refusal, so I went along good-naturedly with the trio to the tavern to see the thing out. Tommy brought out a table and the money was emptied upon it. Parson Wilks counted it first, and that sly old dog managed to slip a fifty-cent shinplaster up his coat-sleeve. When he had finished he reported \$6.42. John Wiley then counted it, and managed to brush a twenty-five cent piece off from the table with his elbow so that it fell on his knees, from whence he carefully transferred it to his pocket. "You are mistaken," said he; "I only find \$6.17." "I



THE PILLARS OF THE CHURCH LOOKING AFTER THE CHURCH FUNDS (Page 249)

don't understand that," said Parson Wilks. "I counted it very carefully." Deacon Amory then took the money, and in a very neat way covered up a dollar with his handkerchief, which he pretended to let fall upon the table. He then put the handkerchief with the money in it into his pocket. "Really," said he, when he had counted it over, "the cents seem to be right, but I only make five dollars. Yes," he continued, recounting it, "you are both wrong. There is only \$5.17." "That is singular," said John Wiley. "Let me count it again," said Parson Wilks; "we ought to make it agree." So he took the money and all he could make of it was \$4.92. Then Wiley took it and all he could count was \$4.82. Then Deacon Amory insisted upon counting it again and all he could make was \$4.32. "Gentlemen," said Parson Wilks, feeling in his pocket to see whether the postal currency he had taken was all safe, and out of sight, "it's my candid opinion that if this money is counted over many more times there will not be any left. If Deacon Amory will sign a receipt for \$4.22"—and here he accidentally brushed three ten-cent shinplasters upon the floor and picked up two of them—"the church will be satisfied." "I decline

to sign a receipt until I know how much there is. My impression is that there's something wrong in the count. I never had money bother in the way this does," said John Wiley; "let's count it again." "Very well," said Parson Wilks, "I will begin. But pray count with more care. There is no use making such mistakes." At it again they went, but met with no better luck than before, for every man of them managed to lessen the amount before it left his hands. When it came around to Parson Wilks again there was only \$3.21 left. Said the parson: "This money seems to be enchanted; it taketh unto itself the wings of a dove and flieth away." Said John Wiley: "Any one would think from the way the count comes out that we were not used to handling money." Said Deacon Amory: "I don't believe three heads are better than one in the matter of finance." As they were no better off than before, a new count was proposed. Deacon Amory objected. "Gentlemen," said he, "I propose to compromise this thing. There now seems to be three dollars." "\$3.21," cried John Wiley. "No, sir, only three dollars." "Let it go at that," said Parson Wilks; "go on with the compromise." "My suggestion is this,"

continued the oleaginous Amory. "We have been to a great deal of trouble about this matter, and it is no more than right that we should be fairly compensated. I propose, therefore, that each of us takes fifty cents for our services, and I will then sign a receipt for \$1.50." "The proposition is a fair one," said Parson Wilks. "I agree to it," said John Wiley. And so each one took fifty cents and Amory signed a receipt for the balance. I calculate the church lost about \$5.50 through that piece of financiering. I understand that both Wiley and Wilks have pronounced the charges against Amory, as to dishonesty, to be utterly unfounded, and that a more truthful, honest, and upright man never lived, themselves excepted, of course. Now I might go to work and moralize over this little incident, but it's out of my line. My best hold is to demoralize.

Shinplasterly yours,

R. S. TRUEMAN.

LETTER XXXIX.

WONDERFUL COMBINATION OF TALENT AND EXTRA-
ORDINARY EXHIBITION OF MUSICAL GENIUS.

PINE GROVE, *April 25.*

T isn't the easiest task in the world to write a letter when there is nothing to write about. Things do not happen every day out this way, but when they do I make much, and sometimes more, and not unfrequently the most of them. I have a great notion to write you about the concert we had here last Sunday night. I do not like to do so either very well, for musical people have such tender corns that you cannot point at them, to say nothing of treading on them, without their squealing. I don't want to get into a muss if I can help it, and people that sing are awful testy. However, I will smooth the matter over as well as such an outrageous performance can be smoothed over, and in case I do not get desperate, as I am apt to do when writing, I will

give you as fair a criticism as my injured sensibilities will permit. To begin with, the concert was given for a benevolent object, by the choir, assisted by the bellows blower and a few outsiders who got into the musical ring on the strength of their voices. The object of it all was to buy a new bell rope, the old one being weak, and accustomed to break at unexpected times in undesirable places. The purpose was all right enough, but it is a singular circumstance that the new rope cost just \$17.25, which was the precise amount taken at the door. I suppose the reason of this apparent singularity would be made obvious if I mentioned the names of the committee that had the matter in charge. Not being a fighting character I omit the names. The church was well filled with a hundred or more people at fifteen cents a head. The performance began with a quartette entitled "Bologna," which I believe is a church tune. They sang it pretty well, considering. Next was a pastoral duet written by an eminent horticulturist, entitled "Don't you wish you had some early spring peas and green lamb?" It was sung by Mrs. J. Amory and George Low, and was wretched enough. Next came a chorus,

written expressly for the occasion, called "We have come from the mountains of the old Granite State." The most of the audience labored under the impression that the chorus ought to have gone back where it came from without unnecessary delay. William Long then sang the well-known solo, "Put me on my little couch with warm bricks to my feet." He wasn't asked to repeat it. Following this was a septette, for seven voices, written by Howler, called "Oh, what's the matter anyway?" The singers broke down twice, but finally finished it, to the great relief of the audience. The "Melodeon Solo" was a squaky fugee, by one of the old masters, who suicided immediately after he had composed it. The audience didn't blame him for having done so, and felt inclined to follow his example while listening to it. It was too long. Half an hour is sufficient for any melodeon solo, no matter how beautiful, but to string out such a thing as that was for a whole hour, and to have it strung out by such an outlandish player as Miss Dany is, was imposing upon the people, and they resented it by hissing in a dignified way. George Low then sung a bass solo, entitled "Ker Chunk." The first verse runs:

'Tis the voice of the bullfrog,
I hear him complain,
I must hit him a rap
Or he'll bellow again.

The singer was somewhat embarrassed by some one throwing peanuts at him. Next came a trio for male voices, which was sung by George Low, William Long, and Matilda Hooker, called "Was Cain an Abel Man?" It was sung very poorly, in consequence of the boy at the bellows going to sleep and letting the wind out of the instrument. This closed the first part.

Time, 10 P.M. The second part began with an ecclesiastical refrain: "The daughters of Judah & Co. demand the right of suffrage voting." This piece was a quarter of an hour too long. Then came three or four pieces scarcely worth mentioning, which were executed in the highest style of barbarism. After these came the grand feature of the evening. Miss Dany performed the great musical feat, never before attempted, by playing upon two melodeons at once. The instruments were placed at right angles to each other, Miss Dany sitting in the angle thus formed. She played better than she did the first time, although it was nothing to

brag of. While playing she sang a simple Sunday-school hymn called, "Ain't I glad to go to a Sunday-school where they tend strictly to business." She was rapturously applauded, and was going to do it all over again, but the folks said it was a shame to impose upon her good nature to such an extent, and so the audience got out of listening to the triangular effort again. The full chorus then sang a massive production by Earl Y. Riser, entitled "Wake, wake, the sun's been up more'n an hour." Afterwards Gilbert Geelie sang a pathetic song, called "The Jams of Matrimony," which was decidedly inappropriate for a sacred concert. By this time it was midnight, and the people who had washing to do the next day began to go out in squads, perceiving which, the singers slammed their books down upon the seats and refused to sing more. They even intimated that the audience couldn't tell good music when they heard it. Some one in the audience called out "try us and see." This ended the entertainment, and I hope I never again will be obliged to take notes or notice of such a feeble display.

Thinkingly yours,

R. S. TRUEMAN.

LETTER XL.

THE AUTHOR AS A PRIME EVIL GRANGER.

PINE GROVE, *May 6.*

I AM engaged in the pursuit of my garden. When I shall catch up to it the land only knows. My time, however, is wholly devoted to this fascinating work, and I write this letter with a hoe-handle, while simultaneously raking off last year's crop of weeds, which I was unable to gather last fall on account of a lack of disposition to do so. The season is getting the best of me, for while spring is two-thirds finished my garden isn't a quarter completed. I always work slow and sure. If I have any best hold this is it, especially the slow part. I go out and labor incessantly for five minutes, and then I come back and rest, and reflect upon the havoc I have made among the angleworms. I also lay my plans for future action. These things take considerable time. When I cannot rest any more I come into

the garden Maude again, as somebody who don't know much about gardening, if he does call himself a poet, once said. I began my garden early, but it does not look like an early garden for all that. It has rather the appearance of one of those better-late-than-never-if-at-all gardens. I began spading in February, just to make a commencement, and yesterday I tried to find the place where the first shovelful of earth was turned, and I had to give it up. Tommy Jones says that by the time I get it all spaded I will have to go back and spade it over again, the ground will get so hard. But then Tommy don't get tired as often and as easy as I do; if he did, he could appreciate the situation more keenly, and would cease his uncalled-for and unkind observations. I am so bewildered as to what to sow, or set out or plant (if I ever get along as far as that), that I am cheated out of half of my regular sleep and have lost the best part of my appetite. If any one finds it, they will secure an article that has never been known to fail in the driest season.

I find that literary pursuits, and spading gardens, do not run in the same channels. They are entirely different games. When spades are trumps and gardening the game, you can take a

hand with some show of winning. But when intellectual diamonds turn up, and you try to polish them for public exhibition, you find that your former labor has unsettled your writing capacity, and you are apt to produce a composition tea of the weakest kind. The two things are incongruous, as a friend of mine once remarked, being in a state of verbal rhapsody. My last letter about the concert, written in a careless way, while my mind was preoccupied with my garden, came within an ace of raising the deuce with me, for clubs turned up trumps in the unappreciative hearts of the people, and I only escaped a licking by solemnly promising never to ask for any more free tickets to shows and things. I have either got to quit writing or quit horticulture. I have got to abandon my literary garden or my potato patch. I cannot produce both intellectual and vegetable food. I don't know whether I had, or hadn't, or why. I am so desperate that I shall become a desperado if I don't make up my mind to do one, or the other, or both, or neither. I tried to buy a garden already made, or leave my measure for one, but the people that deal in this kind of ware were unable to make satisfactory terms with me.

They offered to supply me at a reasonable rate and throw off half for cash. The bargain wasn't concluded. They can keep their second-hand gardens for all I care.

Despairingly, yet hopefully yours,

R. S. TRUEMAN.

LETTER XLI.

ORGANIZATION OF THE PINE GROVE KU-KLUCKERS.

PINE GROVE, *May 10.*

IT has come at last. I have expected and prophesied that it would come, and my prophetic soul, like that of Hamlet, has not been mistaken. A society for the development of the rights of unprotected females, and for the equal diffusion of punishment among unbelieving males, has been organized in Pine Grove. Notice was passed around among the down trodden that a conflagration would be held at the meeting-house on Tuesday night, but only the faithful would be admitted to participate in the mental feast. The arrangement committee tried to obtain a room in a private house, where facilities for making tea could be had, but it was found impossible to do so. On Tuesday afternoon two womanly females came marching into

town, who had walked all the way from Rochester, just to show their manly independence. These persons had come for the purpose of instituting a branch society for the womanly art of self-defiance. They made their headquarters at Mr. Dany's, where many of the ladies called upon them. At seven o'clock the church doors were opened, but only women were permitted to enter and observe the mystic women's rites. The meeting was pounded into order by Mrs. Dany, who took pleasure in introducing to the brilliant galaxy of virtue and intelligence which she saw assembled before her, those sky-rockets of female rights—those women who, having abandoned their homes and families, were giving their lives and their efforts to the propagation of human justice and the establishment of divine principles—Mrs. Tungey and Mrs. O'Racket. (Sensational applause.) These ladies, having laid aside their overcoats and stood their umbrellas up in the corner, acknowledged the enthusiastic cheering that greeted them, by graciously ducking their heads. Mrs. Tungey said that she was extremely gratified to be present on such an auspicious occasion—nay, more than that, she was real glad. It was necessary, in order to complete the

organization of the noble army of female Ku-kluckers, that officers should be chosen. And here ensued a very pretty scene. Mrs. Knowall, Mrs. Amory, Mrs. Wiley, Miss Tattler and Betsy McCracken were nominated for permanent chairwomen. Mrs. Dany nominated herself for the office. Mrs. Tungey tried to effect an election by a *viva voce vote*, but there was so much more *voce* than anything else, that the plan had to be abandoned and the ballot substituted. No choice on first ballot, every woman voting for herself. Mrs. Wiley protested against such action. As she had first raised her clarion voice aloft within the classic precincts of Pine Grove in defence of the rights, and against the wrongs, of women, she thought the honor, as a matter of justice and as a recognition of services, ought to be conferred upon herself. She therefore moved that her nomination be made unanimous. Mrs. Knowall said she would be teetotally squomexed before she would consent to such a thing. Mrs. Dana objected, and moved the previous question. Betsy McCracken moved that the meeting adjourn, be gorra. Several ladies, anticipating a riot, moved out of the church. Mrs. Amory called for a new deal. Point of

order raised, that the expression was unparliamentary. Sustained by the chair. A new ballot was ordered. Whole number of votes cast was 35, of which Mrs. Dana received 2; scattering, 33. Mrs. Dana was declared elected. On taking the chair she expressed her satisfaction with the result of the balloting, and thanked her supporters for the interest they had taken in her behalf. It was time that women began to move in the matter of equal rights and unequal wrongs, and what more appropriate moving time could be selected than the month of May. Our defamers have said that if woman accepts the ballot, she must accept everything else. Women can be as good lawyers as men, for what are lawyers but persons given to the use of the tongue glibly? They can be as good farmers, for it is rare to find a woman who has ever washed dirty clothes but what is familiar with the products of the soil. (Terrific banging of shoe leather after they began to see the joke.) Some females object to the ballot being conferred upon the sex, but like good beef, it's rare you'll find it. Mrs. Dany then read a letter from S-s-n B. A-t-o-y, which was a splendid dissertation on woman's rights, but a poor specimen of woman's

write, to judge by the bungling manner in which it was read. Mrs. Stringer then got up on a bench and tried to read an original essay, but the chairwoman declared it out of order. Some one moved that Mrs. Stringer lay her essay on the table. Mrs. Stringer said she'd lay there herself first. Motion withdrawn. They then went to work to nominate persons to fill the remaining offices, with the following result: For vice-scolder, Mrs. Wiley; book-keeper, Mrs. Klinker; financier, Mrs. Moneybags. The chairwoman announced the standing committees: On parasols, the Missers Dany, Hooker and Amory; on foreign relations to the business of other people, Missers Dany, Low and Wren; on chignons and squeaky shoes, Missers Dany, Fussy and Miss Long; on other folks' new clothes, Missers Dany, Stringer and Scroon; on the abolishment of household work, the entire society. Mrs. Skinner said it was unfair for Mrs. Dany to be on all the committees. Mrs. Dany desired to be informed whether the previous speaker had mental calibre enough to mind her own business. This came near making a muss, and Mrs. Skinner left the church grating her teeth, the sound of which was visible to the naked ear half a

mile distant. After this the following question was discussed, "Are women really what they try to make themselves out to be?" It was decided in the affirmative, every one speaking on that side of the question. The society then let out.

It may be wondered at how I obtained these particulars. I will simply say that if the women hadn't talked so loud, and the broken window in the church had been repaired, neither Tommy Jones nor myself could have heard what was said, and I should have been unable to furnish this truthful account. The society has a great work to perform. Will it manfully come up to the task?

Yours in doubt,

R. S. TRUEMAN.

LETTER XLII.

THE AUTHOR UNDER THE WEATHER.

PINE GROVE, *June 1.*

AN IDLE IDYL.

I scream, but to my cry
No ice-cream comes as yet ;
I call for a nice cake,
An ice cake I can't get.

Ice cold it was, but now
I scold for it again ;
I long for winter's snow,
But 'tis no use to complain.

O, summer's frizzling heat—
Fit theme for melting lays—
Come, fans and linen clothes,
And close these burning days !

That cooler days will come
Experience's school doth teach ;
'Twill curb my punning ways,
My punishment 'twill reach

[Coldsmith's Hidden Icicle.

I don't know what the opinion of those fellows in Washington, who run the probability machine, may be, concerning the weather, but it looks to me as though the summer had come wrong end to. It is ridiculous to have August weather in June. You might as well have canned peaches in October, or ice-cream in December ; one is as proper as the other. This thing has got to be fixed, or I'll move up north, where they don't know what weather means. One can keep warm in a *fur* country as well as here.

MY GARDEN

begins to yield an income. The first instalment was paid in the shape of dandelion greens, last week. Also horse-radish. I never realized before how much of good eating could be had from a garden. I am going to have some early green corn by the ears in a very few months. I can hardly restrain my impatience for the time to come around. I have got my lettuce plants set out ; I have staked up my turnips and sowed my potatoes. Think it better not to plant any onions. One of my neighbors has got enough for two families, and he doesn't keep a dog. Onions is my great strength : I scent of them from afar.

PERSONAL.

Captain Long went to Rochester the other day, and came back with two as black eyes as I ever looked upon and shuddered over. They belong to Mrs. Long. A minister in your city gave Mr. Long the right and title to them in a little transaction, which united the captain and the Mrs. in the holy bonds of padlock and the jaws of matrimony. Tommy Jones has gone on a fishing excursion in the wilds of Braddock's Bay. If he lives, he will come back alive this week some time, or next week, or at some other future time, if he comes at all. He says he don't believe in sparing the rod and spoiling his appetite. I am tending bar for him while he is away, and find it exhilarating business. (Mr. Trueman's manuscript furnishes abundant evidence of this.) I told him when he went away not to hurry back on account of business, for I would do the needful in his absence. I wanted to know where he bought his liquors, by the wholesale. I didn't find out. He said if his wife told me where he bought his liquor he'd lick her when he returned. Mrs. Dany has had a couple of teeth pulled, and seems to be furbishing up her

personal appearance extensively. A stranger, judging from her chignon, might think she was putting on hairs. All the farmers about here who are busy, are hard at work.—Deacon Amory and Parson Wilks have gone away for a few days, which accounts for a scarcity of items. John Wiley, the grocery keeper, got out of tea last week, and the Sewing Society has adjourned until he can replenish his stock.

Perspiringly yours,

R. S. TRUEMAN.

LETTER XLIII.

OUR CORRESPONDENT MAKETH AN ENEMY AND DIS-
COURSETH TO YE MANY FRIENDS.

PINE GROVE, *June 12.*



THINGS continue in New York *state-u quo*. People that heretofore swore at the hot weather, now put on their overcoats, and blaspheme vigorously at the change in the atmosphere. Some people never are suited with winter clothes or summer clothes. The close of summer suits me best. Tommy Jones has returned from Braddock's, with a string of fish only equalled by the string of stories he has to tell. He notes as a remarkable piscatorial phenomenon that nearly all the fish he obtained were in-seine. When Tommy counted up the profits on his bar a wonderful change came over his countenance—more change than went into his pocket. I represented that trade was dull. He

responded by rapping on the heads of the liquor barrels, which gave forth a hollow sound, and by pointing to the rows of empty bottles. I told him I was entitled to a great deal of credit, to which he replied that my credit had run out, and hereafter it would be cash. He garnished his conversation with brimstony expressions which I dislike to repeat, but which were very effective, and moved me not only to tears, but also out of doors. I am of the opinion that I am barred out. I find that Tommy Jones doesn't love me as much as he pretended, and it looks as though the telegraph wire of affection, that has so long united our hearts, will have to be taken down, and the offices closed.

TO MY FAIR AND UNFAIR CORRESPONDENTS.

It is amusing to see the number of letters I daily receive from unknown friends, and unfriendly enemies. It is a musing theme to dwell upon. They come to me with all sorts of advice and all manner of questions, and they generally arrive unsigned, which prevents my answering them and saves postage stamps. However, there are a few worthy of a reply, and although it is

disagreeable to answer in this public manner, as I cannot open my heart as I otherwise would, I think it better to do so. A. B.—You are right, but I am writer. You cannot fiddle an old tune that everybody knows, and pretend you composed it. You can compose your feelings on that point.—C. D. Tommy Jones is not a member of the Good Templars, or any other temple, and does not write for any temperance journals. You have been cruelly misinformed.—E. F. What do you suppose I care whether you like my style or not? Your writing is so illegible I cannot make out a single word. Its close gives me great satisfaction.—G. H. By no means. True poetry is the essence of ginspiration. True-man poetry comes as close to it as may be. The specimen you send me may do for hymn-books and comic papers, but it won't do for me. Please enclose twelve cents for short postage on letter.—I. J. Maybe and maybe not. Sometimes it does and sometimes it doesn't. You cannot put a head on lettuce by clubbing it.—K. Use a fine-tooth comb and persevere.—L. M. Get out! I have no time to devote to such specimens of numbers, such as your problem seems to be; still, as you seem to mean well I will answer

this one, but if you have any regard for my feelings don't do so any more.

Q. If eleven hens on a hot day can lay four quarts of medium egg plants, how many egg plants will it take to lay a million hens on a cold day? A. I don't know.—N. O. Am not personally acquainted with Shake Spear. He moved away before I came here. From your description, should judge him to be a rascally newspaper correspondent.—P. R. Don't you think any more of yourself than to use a small i when a large I is proper? It may save ink, but it galls me to the quick to observe it. John is not spelled with a little g.—S. T. The almanac is of no use. It doesn't come to time. It may do for your aunt Cestor but not for your uncle True-man.—U. V. W. The jokes you send me are good. They have been considered so for ten years. As you say there are no new discoveries in the art of funnygraphy.—X. Z. Your letter perplexes me. Gasconade is good. So is lemonade, the way Tommy Jones fixes it. Cannot say as to musical ability, but know how to whistle. Horseradish in May is not unusual. We have it in winter. It is raised out of glass bottles. You are very sharp in your cutting remarks. I have

as much right to be synonymous as you have to be anonymous. Can I rely upon your protestations of eternal love and undying fidelity? You flatter me. On re-reading your letter I feel flatter than ever.—Thus do I answer a few of my many correspondents. Blessings on their devoted heads, and confusion to their facile pens!

Correspondingly yours,

R. S. TRUEMAN.

LETTER XLIV.

WHEREIN IS BRIEFLY DESCRIBED AN OCCURRENCE WHICH CAN HAPPEN ONLY ONCE A YEAR, AND WHEREIN ALSO IS NARRATED A PERFORMANCE THAT CAN OCCUR AT ANY TIME, BUT PROBABLY WILL NOT.

PINE GROVE, *July 8, 1871.*



WE did not have much of a time here on the 4th. The rain damped the proceedings, and there was a manifest disposition on the part of the people to refrain from all demonstrations, not that they liked the American flag less, but quiet more. In point of fact we fourth-of-Julied very little. Several humane citizens made up a purse, and on the night of the 3d bought up the entire stock of firecrackers, torpedoes, chasers, and different kind of fizzers, poppers and bangers, that John Wiley had in his grocery store, and dumped the entire assortment in the mill-pond. The result was a quiet day, but on the evening of the 4th, the diabolical ingen-

uity of the boys, encouraged by the treatment they had received, manifested itself in an open-air concert. All the tin-pans, boilers and fish-horns in the village were drafted into service, and every man who had contributed anything to destroy the fun of the boys received a gratuitous serenade. The noise was fearful. It seemed as though the Falls Field orchestration had got away and was off on a spree. The number of tunes those boys played was astonishing, and their musical ability must be a source of great comfort to their respective parents. There was a brisk demand for shingles this morning, and from the amount of juvenile crying that was done, I judge that an entertainment of a somewhat different character was given.

But what I chiefly wanted to write you about was the great living curiosity Klinker has got. It is the condumbdest thing I ever saw. Klinker was looking through his potato patch a few days ago, when what should he discover but a couple of potato bugs serenely nibbling away on the vines, and evidently enjoying themselves amazingly. The mind of Klinker has an ingenious turn, and he never observes anything without considering what useful purpose it may be

put to. He went into the house and got a bottle, and after considerable work, succeeded in capturing the bugs alive. He has been at work ever since training the animals, and it is astonishing to see what a state of perfection potato bugs can be brought. He has taught one to play on a little musical instrument that he made out of horse-hair and a crooked pin, and it is laughable to see the little creature sit down on a thimble, with one leg crossed, and play on the fiddle while the other one dances around in the box, keeping perfect time. He has taught them to march around like soldiers, with sticks for guns, and they go through many military evolutions at the word of command. He has learned one of them to smoke a little pipe, and the creature evidently likes it. There is no end of the tricks Klinker has taught them to perform. I thought it would kill me to see them in their little jackets, swaggering around with their hands in their pockets, and touching their hats to one another as natural as life. Sometimes he lets them go out in the garden for exercise, and the way they make their educated relations—the other potato bugs—stand around, is fun to behold. They always return home at sunset, and seem to have no

desire to stay out late nights. It costs very little to keep them. Their food consists of mashed potatoes, with a dash of cayenne; dandelion greens and beet tops. They are very fond of cold boiled pork, and not unfrequently consume a pound at a sitting. They do their own housework, and the little cage where they live is as neat as beeswax. When they are fully trained Klinker proposes to travel about the country with them in a side show attached to some circus. Tommy Jones offered a liberal price for the animals, but Klinker says there is more money in them than the price named by Tommy. It hardly seems possible that a potato bug had sufficient intelligence to learn anything except to gobble up potato vines, but Klinker has demonstrated that they can be taught to do anything. Klinker is entitled to the gratitude of the whole world, and if anybody will start a subscription in his behalf I will do my share towards collecting it.

Feverishly yours,

R. S. TRUEMAN.

LETTER XLV.

THE SEMI-CENTENNIAL OF THOMAS JONES, ESQ.,
WITH ALL THE ACCOMPANYING FESTIVITIES PERTAINING THERETO.

PINE GROVE, *Sept.* 13.

OMMY JONES went up into the fifties yesterday. To mark the event he erected a social monument more enduring than brass, or Frear stone. It was an incident that had never happened before. He had lived half a century; he was fifty years old; he could never have a more pat opportunity of celebrating the occurrence. Therefore Tommy Jones invited the leading citizens of Pine Grove to meet him in epicurean array at his hostelry and expense, and this feast was the typical monument to which I have already alluded. The invited guests assembled at an early hour last night in the bar-room, from whence, after a few moments spent in conversation, Tommy led the way to the

dining-room. The table was handsomely ornamented with bouquets of tissue-paper flowers, drenched with cologne to make them odorous; all the tablespoons in the house were arranged in an orderly manner up and down the festive board; the plates were turned upside down, with the knives and forks laid upon them in the shape of a Grecian cross, and the tumblers were adorned with little towels stuck in triangularly. The room was brilliantly illuminated by the light of a dozen kerosene lamps. From the ceiling depended green boughs, and other fixings calculated to lend enchantment to the scene. The walls were lined with appropriate mottoes, such as "Come and see me," "Never allow yourself to be taken in, unless it is Tommy Jones's inn," "This is the place we long have sought," "Welcome, say I; we'll come, say the guests."

Tommy, with an air of jollity, took the head of the table; Parson Wilks, with an air of sedateness, took the other end; John Wiley, with an air of solemnity, sat on one side of the castor; and myself, with no airs whatever, occupied the other side. Klinker, Captain Long, Deacon Amory and a dozen others filled the remaining chairs. As the guests were gifted with

urgent appetites, on account of having abstained from their usual rations for a number of days, dinner was at once served. The way they made things fly on the wings of hunger would have moved an angel. I was very much moved. I append the bill of fare, which was a pretty fair bill, considering :

GASTRONOMICAL GUIDE BOARD.

"Non multa, sed multum."

ELEMENTARY.

Mud Turtle Soup.

Clammy Soup.

PROGRESSIVE.

Codfish de sel.

Stewed Halibut.

Mackerel with Turk's Island Sauce.

POSITIVE.

Beef à la Bull Run.

Mutton-chopped.

Pork-Greasian Bend.

Balled Codfish.

COMPARATIVE.

Potatoes (sub rosa—Early Rose).

Deodorized Onions.

Cabbage—Early, N. Y.

Other things.

SUPERLATIVE.

Sweetened Cider.

Crab apples.

Bay rum.

Dried Apple Pie.

Supper ended, the cloth was removed. (Of course you know enough to know that the cloth was not removed, but only the dishes. This is the polite way of putting it. I have not travelled for nothing.) A pitcher of elderberry wine was then introduced and the glasses filled. Tommy Jones then made a brief address, thanking his fellow-citizens for their display of masterly activity during feeding time, and announced the first toast:

First—"My friends—may they live to see me a thousand years old." Everybody jumped up and balanced their tumblers on their lips. Second—By Parson Wilks, "The semi-centennial of T. Jones—many returns of the happy day." Liquid response. Third—By John Wiley, "Our dinner. Success to the compounder, Mrs. Jones. May her kitchen fire never say die. Her turnips can't be beat. Pass along the pitcher." Fourth—By Deacon Amory, "The entire Jones's crew. May their concentrated shadow never be longer. I'll take a little more, if you please." By this time the elderberry wine had begun to make mischief, and some of the party began to show signs of demoralization. Fifth—By J. Klinker, "The military—how I love 'em. No more for me."

Captain Long responded: "I rise to (hic) 'splain. You'd scarce (hic) 'spect one of my age on such an (hic) 'straordinary (hic) 'casion to make more'n limited remarks on such er (hic) 'straordinary 'casion." Here the gallant captain glared fiercely around and sat down, fully convinced that he had made the best speech of the evening. Sixth—By Mr. Dany, "We are a brass band of brothers—let's die with our feet to the foe;" and he slipped down under the table. As the rest of the company were not in a better condition, it was deemed best to adjourn. It was a work of considerable difficulty to restore them all to the bosom of their families, inasmuch as everybody insisted on going home with everybody else, but Tommy and I succeeded in straightening them all out at last.

Pleasingly yours,

R. S. TRUEMAN.

LETTER XLVI.

MY NOVEL ; OR, VARIETIES IN PINE GROVE LIFE.

PINE GROVE, *Oct. 1.*

 I HAVE been requested by an utter stranger to write a novel. If I had any friends, I have reason for believing that they would ask me not to do so. Being both poor and friendless leaves me in excellent condition to follow out my own sweet will, according to the dictates of my fire-proof conscience.

I never read a novel in my life except, to wit :

I. Gulliver's Travels, wherein the race was to the Swift.

II. Robinson Crusoe, wherein the battle was to De Foe.

I have arrived at the conclusion that the afore-said were fabrications. So, if a novel be of that character, I accept the challenge. Fabrications are the joy of my facile lead-pencil.

MY NOVEL,

OR,

VARIETIES IN PINE GROVE LIFE.

Stubbornly founded on the rock of facts.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCES THE WITNESSES.

The characters contained in this absorbing tale are seven in number, as follows :

I. Parson Wilks. Weighs 165 pounds, with a severe cast of countenance. Is 5 feet 8 inches in length. Thinks he is some on preaching, and he is—a little.

II. Deacon Amory. Aged 65, and was born on one of Birthington's Washdays—I mean on one of Washington's Birthdays. He bosses the meeting-house and manipulates a small farm. Is a large owner (on the sly) of government securities, to the amount of a thousand dollar bond.

III. Thomas Jones. Four decades and a half have passed over his head. Character good ; can read ; also, write. Mixes up things to drink for a living. He makes them good. More

honest in summer than in winter—on account of the longer days.

IV. Prelusha Amory is the daughter of the Deacon heretofore mentioned. Is old enough to vote, but they decline to let her. Is the Sheroiné of the novel ; measures 32 inches around the waist, besides having dark colored eyes and matchless hair.

V. William Way. The He one of the story. Age 23, but without sufficient experience in the affairs of this life to prevent him from falling in love with Prelusha Amory. He couldn't help it, if he was poor.

VI. Mrs. Mariann Amory. Is the supposed mother of Prelusha ; generally recognized as such, and probably is so. Rather likes Will Way as a nice young man, and hankers after him for a son-in-law. Pulls the scale at 140 avoirdupois.

VII. R. S. Trueman. That is me. Am fat, fair and forty. I introduce myself into the novel, to add to the general interest thereof.

CHAPTER II.

THE PLAINTIVE PLEADS.

A number of fellows loved Prelusha. Among them was William Way. He loved her like all

possessed. You may Poe! Poe! at the idea, but he loved her far more than any Bel Lee could ever hope to be loved. Prelusha also loved William. It is too fine a point to determine whether he loved her, or she him, the most, but altogether the entire amount of expended affection was some.

One balmy day, Will Way sidled up to Deacon Amory and intimated, that, with the consent of the Deacon, he would shorten Prelusha's back name two syllables and two letters.

The deacon remarked, in a cursory sort of manner, that he would see everything blue first, before he would lend a willing ear to any such proposition.

Will Way, dismayed, but not disheartened, arose for an explanation, and called for the objections to the Bill.

The deacon said that poverty was a blessing that he didn't care particularly about introducing into the family, but if the young man having a will, should find a way of mustering into service the sum of one thousand dollars, within a reasonable time, he would withhold his parental veto.

Will Way, seeing no other manner of extricating himself, sadly consented, and bowed before

his fate, as he did before the Deacon, very sorrowfully, and with a feeling of extreme goneness.

CHAPTER III.

THE ADVICE OF COUNSEL.

Will Way subsided at once to the tavern, to consult that eminent strategist, Thomas Jones, and that chunk of wisdom, myself. After relating his hard-hearted anecdote to his two sympathetic friends, he said he threw himself into our hands as the handiest thing he knew how to do.

Tommy Jones bent his thoughtful gaze upon a brilliant bottle, that gracefully reposed under the shade of a forest of tumblers on an upper shelf, and meditated with profundity. I also bent my gaze of thoughtfulness in the same general direction. At last Tommy, smiling ingenuously, spoke up:

“The Deacon has a \$1,000 bond. You must steal it, or cause it to be stolen.”

This was certainly good advice, and I remarked that it was precisely what I was about to advise. Everybody has a right to do good, that evil may come. We resolved ourselves into

a committee of the whole, probed the matter to its greatest depth, dissected it carefully, and extracted the fact that to steal the bond was an act of unalloyed impossibility. No one knew of its whereabouts, except Deacon Amory and his other half. But Will said that Mrs. Amory was a personal friend of his, and wouldn't hesitate at anything wherein Prelusha and himself were concerned. It would be for her interest as a matter of principle.

CHAPTER IV.

IN WHICH THE PLAINTIVE ACTS ACCORDINGLY.

Accordingly Will Way went over to Deacon Amory's, about the time the shades of night were falling fast, and managed to secure an interview with Mrs. Amory at the pump. He told her his future joyfulness depended upon his having a \$1,000 bond in a hurry; that he could not obtain it by labor and by saving in many years, and even if he learned to labor, he could not learn to wait; he knew where there was one

that Mrs. A. might conscientiously steal for him, and if she would only do so, she would cause two hearts with but a single idea, and a couple of souls that beat as a unit, to be forever happy ; that the bond was the property of the Deacon, and that stealing from her husband was no crime in the eyes of all the attendant circumstances.

Well, he talked about five pages in length, used all the figures of speech of which he was master, and finally came back to the original figures \$1,000. At last the old lady, saying she would ne'er consent, consented to steal the bond, on the condition that it should be returned as soon as its little mission had been accomplished.

It was therefore agreed that Will should leave the country for a few weeks, then return, exhibit the bond, marry Prelusha, and explain the whole affair to the Deacon in any way compatible with his self-respect. For fear of accidents (cunning old lady) she intimated that she would retain the bond in her own possession until the proper moment arrived.

I know of some fellows that would have thrown up the whole concern at once on an intimation of that kind. But, as I heretofore remarked, William loved Prelusha, and Prelusha

loved William, and she couldn't give him up, and he couldn't give her up. How could he—could he?

CHAPTER V.

THE MORTAL SURPRISE OF THE DEFENDANT.

Will Way went off about ten miles into the country, first informing the Deacon that he would return with funds enough to buy his daughter out and out, before an entire moon should wax and wane. The Deacon patted him on the shoulder in a gentlemanly sort of way, and encouraged him to go in.

He went in about three weeks. Then he began to believe that the time for artifice and dissimulation had expired, and the hour for an exhibition of true manliness had arrived. So he returned to his native place, and called upon the man whom he longed to clasp to his manly bosom as a father-in-law. He told the aforesaid that by means of an unbalanced bid, through the mediation of a fraudulent canal contract, he had succeeded in amassing eleven hundred dollars (to

wit \$1,100), with which he had purchased a United States bond of the face value of one thousand dollars.

After the Deacon had hugged him for an hour or two, he manifested a natural desire to have his vision gladdened by a square look at the bond. He said he wanted to see the truth as well as hear it. William promised to return with it in the afternoon, and hinted to Mrs. Amory that the insupportable and heavy hour was at hand.

Mrs. Amory at once proceeded to steal the Deacon's bond from its hiding-place in the stocking bag, and transferred it to William, who presently exhibited it to the Deacon, who was quite overcome. He made Will promise to assign, transfer, and set over the bond to Prelusha on her wedding day, and strongly urged that the affair be hurried up at its maximum rate of speed.

Now inasmuch as Prelusha and her ma were both comfortably posted as to what was going forward, and knew precisely how it all would terminate, and, moreover, had been working by sunlight and by candlelight, for many days, on the clothing of Prelusha, there was little else left to

do but to send for the minister. Accordingly Will Way suggested the day after to-morrow as an appropriate time for such an auspicious occasion, and the Deacon consented, and Mrs. Amory agreed, and Prelusha didn't object.

CHAPTER VI.

NOT GUILTY—BUT IT MUST NOT BE REPEATED.

The day after to-morrow came about within the usual space of time, and the wedding guests assembled to see fair play, and to eat what was set before them, if so it might be. There were her folks and his folks, her folks' relatives and the relations of his folks; all the neighbors, both male and female, including T. Jones and Parson Wilks. Besides all these people, I, also, was present.

Prelusha and William stepped to the front, and amid the applause of the assembly Parson Wilks tied them together with unexampled brevity. He was less than half an hour about it, which was shortening up the time considerably

for him, for he generally takes advantage of such occasions to deliver a long address, or read an interminable sermon.

As soon as the customary kissing had been concluded, the Deacon winked at his new son-in-law, who proceeded with somewhat unnecessary display to drag forth his bond and present it to Prelusha, who blushing grabbed it.

The Deacon's eyes sparkled.

"Wait a moment," said he; "perhaps I can do as well by you, my daughter, as your husband has done:" and with that, he skipped as playfully from the room as any lively old gentleman of sixty-five could possibly be expected to do.

About three minutes thereafter the lively old gentleman dashed into the room with fire in his eye, horror in his face, and a stocking bag in his hand, and began a series of capers hardly compatible with true dignity.

The time seemed to have arrived for a general and thorough explanation. So Mrs. Amory told the whole story, confessing her sin; Tommy Jones and myself acknowledged ourselves the designers of the justifiable fraud; and the bride and groom intimated that they were not entirely innocent of the transgression.

So the Deacon, unable to alter the state of affairs, gracefully yielded to the situation, kissed his son-in-law, shook hands with his daughter, and invited the entire company to follow him into the dining-room, which they did.

As this is the place where novels generally finish, I take the opportunity of desisting.

R. S. TRUEMAN.

THE END.

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